Canary

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Teen And Up Audiences

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Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Category:
Gen

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
No Romantic Relationship(s), Midoriya Izuku & Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Izuku & Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Iida Tenya & Midoriya Izuku & Uraraka Ochako, Ashido Mina & Midoriya Izuku, Koji Koda & Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku & Todoroki Shouto, Jirou Kyouka & Midoriya Izuku

Character:
Midoriya Izuku, Shinsou Hitoshi, Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Jirou Kyouka, Bakugou Katsuki, Todoroki Shouto, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Uraraka Ochako, Iida Tenya, Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), Class 1-C (My Hero Academia), Ashido Mina, Koji Koda, Original Characters, Komori Kinoko, Kodai Yui, Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Eri (My Hero Academia)

Additional Tags:
Midoriya Izuku Has a Quirk, Midoriya Izuku Does Not Have One for All Quirk, Midoriya Izuku is in General Studies, Present Mic's radio show, Midoriya Izuku is a Nerd, a LOT of music is involved here guys, Cute Midoriya Izuku, Mute Midoriya Izuku, - Temporarily, There's always a mentor in a BNHA fic, But this time it's PRESENT MIC, Protective Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic is a Dork, This Is Not Going To Go The Way You Think, Well it will initially, Happy Ending, I re-read nothing and let the spelling misteaks reign supreme, Illustrations, - occasionally, Fanart, It Gets Worse Before It Gets Better, Selectively Mute Midoriya Izuku, and then he's mute again, And Then He's Not, do I need to make it even clearer or ARE WE GOOD?, please stop giving me song

suggestions, - nope not even asking what a song would do out of curiosity, no more

Language:
English

Collections:
best fic collection ever read, Real Good Shit, Long Fics to Binge, Cosmonauts Fic Recs, You haven't lived if you haven't read this, BNHA BEST CHAPTER FICS TO EVER GRACE THE INTERNET, The Collection From the Clouds, Top bnha fics ✧, love and big apprish to the writers and betas of these pieces, Fanfiction Masterpieces, fics i will read for ever and ever and ever and ever, if these were books i'd buy them (aka my favorites on here), fics i could re-read a hundred of times, Don't Forget These Fics, FreakingAmazingFics, So Much Talent on AO3, Finished golden ones, Quality Fics, I've given my heart and soul for this fic, These are Bundles of Emotions (and I Love them af), BEST MHA FICS EVER, 1Ids a Bitter's Life Sweetener, My Escapism List, Faves and must-reads, Awesomeness, My Favourite Fanfics, The best fics, Legendary Longfics, ♥ All-Time Favorites ♥, My Favourites to read, BNHA Fics that cured my cancer, From the Vault, BNHA fics that give me a will to live, Izuku's Dads, Athenaeum, BEST BOI IZUKU_top BNHA works, Fics That Bring Me ALL That Serotonin, BNHA Rereadables 📖, longfics that butter my bread, любимое, Kai's Eclectic Collection of Fics, My Long loves , Fun to reread, My Favourite Bnha stories to read, Creative Chaos Discord Recs, A badass izuku with 99 issues (seriously is a rabbit with a knife)💙, Love from DadMic, Todo lo que puedo llegar a OLVIDAR, Best of the Best, CKFTR, My Hero Academia fics that caused my insomnia (in a good way), McNanas' Recommends, Best of MHA, The Eternal Crack Server Fic Rec Collection, Goodsoup1543, Finished Favs, my personal stash of good bnha shit, And now for something different, Everything so far, Niks, ✧BNHA FICS I LOVE✧, Haunting My Heart and Healing My Soul, Deku's Multiverse of Madness, Flashfreeze Recs, Adri's Hall of fame, Eatbook's Cherished and wanting more All Fandoms, The Goodest Shit™, koala's favs, Amazing My Hero Academia Fics that are Completed, Phoenix's Favorite Fics, my hero academia: a medley, Favs mesmo, Parsonsaj's Best of the Best of the Best, Ace's Favorite FIcs, Flappy Hands Are Happy Hands, the good good, BestofBNHA_rereadMONTHLY, My Fav MHA Fics❤, Still reading - bnha - my attention span is really short, snowwy's list of best BNHA fics, TemptationisDeadly's Fav Mha ffs, Rainy Day Reads, I'll come back, GreenBeanBroccoliBoi, BNHAHappyFunFics, The Best Fics in Various Fandoms, Find Me Where The Wild Things Are,

PERRRFECT, Completed and Loved💙😈, All kinds: BNHA's Fics version, Good explained characters and interesting plot, Work I completed reading, Finished, Discord Recs from The Rabbit Appreciation Server, Like A Favorite Sweater, isabella9792_readinglist, fics i would download again and again, Izuku Midoriya (because I like him and he deserves more), BNHA fics to pass on to future gremlins, I already read this but i wanna read again

Stats:

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Canary

by cloud_nine_and_three_quarters

Summary

Midoriya Izuku is Quirkless. Well, he thought was. That was until he opened his mouth to sing.
There is more power in Midoriya's singing than he could have ever dreamed of - a power truly worthy of a hero. But will he ever have the confidence to spread his wings and soar?

Follow Canary on his journey to find his voice and become the hero he was always meant to be.

—

I thought, hey you know what would be really hard to write? A story where the super power is singing - so I did it - a story mainly about learning to have confidence in yourself and those around you

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

The Bird Who Was Afraid to Fly

Chapter Notes

Hello and thank you so much for reading my story!
Just a little note for you - please, please, PLEASE don't spam me with hundreds of comments on what songs Midoriya should sing next. When I ask for them, they'll be greatly appreciated, however, there will be no way I'll be able to listen to them all - I mentioned this story on my last fic and got COUNTLESS comments on this very matter and it was a little overwhelming. So, thank you for your enthusiasm, but remember to keep your cool. I am a very timid and reclusive person in real life and I may be scared off - this is not a joke.
Thank you :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Present Mic's Radio Show!

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:30 to 19:30

Canary's Hour

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH!

CANARY: Yay.

PRESENT MIC: IIIIIIIIIIIIITTTTTT'S six thirty! And we all know what that means…

CANARY: I should be doing my homework.

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH – *wait* – that's not what you're supposed to say!

** faint scribbling sounds can be heard **

PRESENT MIC: Are you *actually* doing your homework?!

CANARY: Well, *someone* set us a massive English essay –

PRESENT MIC: You're fluent in English!

CANARY: – that I thought would be acceptable to leave until last minute for precisely that reason. But then I remembered it's due on a Friday and therefore leaving it until last minute would mean I have to do it on a *Thursday* evening and here we are.

** silence follows as the scribbling continues **

PRESENT MIC: Ok, are you actually going to –

CANARY: Almost finished…

PRESENT MIC: What's it on again?

CANARY: You were the one who *set it!*

PRESENT MIC: I have a lot on my shoulders and –

CANARY: Whatever you say, Cockatoo.

** frantic tweeting noises **

CANARY: Yes, thank you, Siren – but if you poop on my work I *will* disown you.

PRESENT MIC: I think I need a pet bird too.

** flapping followed by a yelp, Canary's muffled laughter and Siren's squawks **

PRESENT MIC: PET WAS NOT AN INSULT – I REPEAT – PET WAS *NOT* AN INSULT!

CANARY: I think Siren has an intelligence Quirk – she is way too smart for her own good.

PRESENT MIC: I *meant* I need a bird *companion* too.

** a tense silence ended by a satisfied tweet and a sigh of relief **

CANARY: Finished! Can I hand it in now?

PRESENT MIC: NO! Because I will lose it, guaranteed.

** Canary sighs and a rustling of paper indicates he has shoved his work into a backpack **

PRESENT MIC: ANYWAY – Moving on! We have a show to get to! First things first, as always, let us begin with our weekly talk with one of you lucky listeners!

CANARY: I know what you guys are plotting, and I swear – I *will* hang up.

PRESENT MIC: I'm just going to pretend I didn't hear that and LET'S SEE IF OUR LISTENER PICKS UP!

** a ring tone can be heard – one which Siren repeats dutifully in the background **

LISTENER: Hello?

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH! You have *made it* all the way to our radio show!

LISTENER: Great, so, Midoriya –

CANARY: OH MY GOD, JIRO – I literally *just* said –

LISTENER {JIRO}: Yeah, yeah, whatever – so anyway – what was the English essay on again?

** Canary sighs exasperatingly **

CANARY: You know what, in punishment, I'm not going to tell you.

** A collective groan can be heard from the listener's end **

CANARY: Ok, someone in the radio station is putting you through every time any of you guys call – and to that someone, Siren will find you and make your life a living hell.

** Siren tweets in agreement **

PRESENT MIC: *WELL*, you get one question that is *not* school related, Jiro!

LISTENER {JIRO}: Sure, err… why Canary? You could have chosen literally any other bird name out there – and you went for Canary, why?

CANARY: Oh, that's an easy one. Let me tell you a story!

In a tradition dating back to 1911, canaries were the heroes of the underground, known for the capture of a silent killer, and for being the saviours of countless lives, all because of their singing.

Deep in the coal mines, where men were hard at work, chipping away at the stone walls in search of a black gold, hanging from the ceiling were tiny cages, each inhabited by a little bird – a canary.

The canaries would sing and sing, for it was all they knew – trapped in that tiny box, incapable of flight – all they could do, was sing. And so, they sang. They sang and they sang their little hearts out, finding melody within the rhythmic beat of the miners' pics as they hit the

walls mercilessly, desperate to find the fuel that would keep the cities alive and running. There were times when the miners would live for the singing of the canaries, a gentle reminder of the world above – of the morning sun and kind world they learn to love that little bit more as they spend so much time away from it.

And so, when the singing stops, it's not hard to notice.

The miners look up at the ceiling, and see the little birds, collapsed in their cages – sounds no longer whistling from their throats.

Carbon monoxide – the silent killer.

The gas binds to blood instead of oxygen in a permanent fashion, meaning no matter how much more oxygen a person inhales, it would not satisfy them. It would never reach their cells, and they would die quickly – drifting off into an endless sleep.

There are several reasons that canaries were killed by the gas before the miners. The first, was the chemical make up of a bird's blood. Whilst a human's red blood cells are formed from stem cells in the bone marrow, a bird's simply replicate themselves in the blood stream. This means, poisoned cells can not easily be replaced like they can in a human. However, the more potent reason is the size of a canary – so small, so fragile. Less blood means more can be poisoned at a faster rate. Meaning they drop dead before the miners.

And so, leaving the little bodies of the birds deep in the mines, the men are evacuated before the gas can kill them too.

The sweet sound of bird song, or the lack thereof, being the only reason that their descendants walk this Earth today.

Almost two years earlier

(...Before the radio show)

Midoriya sighed as he closed his book. He was procrastinating –

learning about things he really didn't need to learn about – but when did that ever stop him? Anyway, all this talk of canaries in mines was far more interesting than any of the other facts he should have been committing to his mind.

He was *supposed* to be going over his history work. He was far ahead of the rest of the class, but one of the things he could never have known for sure, was what was to be on UA's entrance exam, and he could never be too careful.

He needed to get into general studies. UA was his first step to –

He glanced up at the poster of All Might looming over his computer. He'd taken the rest of them down. But he couldn't bring himself to completely free his room of memorabilia, and so, the poster remained.

– *becoming a hero*.

No, no – NO.

It was a childish dream. It was about time he gave up and –

– *wish for a Quirk in your next life and take a swan dive of the roof of the building!*

– and focused on a more realistic goal.

It's good to have dreams, but… make sure they're attainable.

Attainable… attainable…

"Izuku!"

Midoriya jumped, almost falling off his chair.

"Can I come in, Izuku?"

He didn't say anything, so his mother let his door creak open.

"Still studying?" she frowned. Inko carried a bowl of ramen into his room and slid it in front of him. She pulled up a chair and sat to eat her own bowl beside him.

It took a moment, but eventually he picked up the chopsticks and began to eat too.

"If you overwork yourself, or you won't be able to perform as well as I

know you can in the exam tomorrow!" his mother insisted.

"I'm sorry, Mum," Midoriya said in an impossibly quiet voice. It was almost a miracle his mother heard him at all.

"Your brain is much like any of your other muscles. You wouldn't go for a run before a marathon! Why should you do the same for an exam? Your brain needs a rest."

Midoriya smiled meekly and nodded.

"Good. If you can't sleep – do something different! Play one of your instruments. I don't mind what time of the night it is – oh, as long as it's not the drums."

Midoriya almost laughed. The smile was good enough for his mum.

"Maybe you could even sing! You know, I don't think I've ever heard you sing before - at least not in a long, long time. You should give it a try!"

He shook his head frantically, almost losing the noodles, halfway to his mouth.

"Why not, Izuku? You were so unsure about dance class at first, but that turned out to be really fun, remember?"

"Singing's different," he protested, his voice still as quiet as a mouse.

"Why is that?"

"Because to sing, I have to first *talk*."

Inko sighed. She put down her chopsticks and gently rubbed her son's shoulders. "You will get into UA – I'm sure you will. And once you're there, you'll make lots of new friends! They won't be like the people at your old school. This is a *hero* school. Even if you're not on the hero course, no one there is going to say anything about your Quirklessness. If they do, just tell one of the teachers and they *will* sort the problem out. The teachers are *heroes*, remember? You used to love heroes so much."

You can't become a hero.

She gazed up at the remaining All Might poster. "Things are going to be different," she insisted, as if she was convincing herself of the fact. "And then, maybe talking won't be so scary!"

Quirkless – useless – mute.

But he wasn't mute – really. Midoriya could talk if he wanted to. But it was just so much easier to fade into the background – to not argue or complain. They pick on him less. He knew his place now – quiet, silent. But then that made it worse. He didn't understand why – but eventually his classmates realised he hadn't talked for months – that they didn't remember what his voice sounded like. Kacchan noticed it too. He found it funny.

So, so funny.

And the teachers didn't care. They told him off for not speaking in class or not answering for the register in the morning. And suddenly the words became harder and harder to say. Uttering a simple *yes* or *no* felt as hard as cracking open a locked safe. His mother took him to see specialists. She said that he would speak to her – but anyone else…

They told him he was selectively mute.

He *told* them that he wasn't. He just didn't like speaking. That confused them. But, nonetheless, Midoriya took the title, hoping his peers would leave him alone now his shyness had a name.

They didn't.

"You could get their autographs!" Inko said suddenly, interrupting his thoughts. "Wouldn't that be nice?"

Midoriya grunted in reply and put down his chopsticks.

"But honey, you've hardly eaten anything! You need brain power!"

"I'll be alright."

Inko hesitated. "D-Does that mean you feel prepared?! That's wonderful to hear! N-Now… it's seven o'clock – so a little early to go to bed quite yet. Why don't you play something? The neighbours said they can hear it if you leave the window open – they really like it! Honestly, if you sang along, it could help with your confidence a little!"

"Maybe one day."

Inko smiled as her son opened the window and picked up his guitar,

tuning it slowly and fiddling with the fret.

“I’m proud of you, Izuku – you know that, right?”

He smiled at her, “Thank you, Mum.”

She picked up her empty bowl and her son’s worryingly full one, before beginning to walk towards the door as Izuku began to strum a tune.

~Tiny Dancer – Elton John~

She left his door open to let the music flow through the apartment, a skip in her step and a smile creeping across her face as she threw away the remainder of the food and washed up the bowls.

Inko began to hum the melody to the famous song. Music drifting through the air and giving the otherwise tedious task a new life and a new rhythm. It gave her such joy to hear her son pour his heart and soul into his music. He loved it more than he had ever loved anything. It gave him a purpose; something to enjoy. He’d wanted to be a hero all his life, but he was Quirkless, and as much as Inko wanted to support him; to say *you can be a hero!* she just couldn’t. Because it wasn’t the truth. Izuku deserved nothing but the truth.

The last ten months had been hard for him. She didn’t understand why but, all of a sudden, that stubborn light of hope that shone so lustrously from him was snuffed out. He stopped talking – focused only on his studies. Consequently, he was so bright that not even that school could put him down. But… that brightness just didn’t hold the same warmth as it once did. All Inko wanted was to see him happy again.

He was so good at the guitar. He had to stop lessons when the teacher said there was nothing more he could possibly teach him, and Izuku refused to spend money on something that was no longer necessary. He had the same attitude for nearly every instrument he’d ever learnt. He knew the guitar, piano, drums – but no instrument that required his mouth to play. Inko wondered if it was because he wanted to sing, but he refused every time. The only class he continued to attend was dance. It had kept his fitness up. If it weren’t for that, Inko was

worried he'd waste away, locked up in his room forever. But the boy had always been drawn to such things – it was like music was a part of him.

Not that she was surprised. It was her husband's influence, she supposed. With his Quirk, fire breath, he could never sing without filling the house with smoke, but that never stopped him when they were younger. He had such a beautiful voice. He told her she wasn't so bad herself. That always made her smile. Inko wondered if Izuku had inherited it. She longed to hear him sing so much, to see if he had.

Inko opened the other windows across the apartment, letting the sound free from its cage to sing to the rest of the world, even if Izuku wouldn't open his mouth to do the same – his music still brought others joy. It held a certain magic in it.

Tiny dancer. He'd danced to this song once before. It had brought her to tears. Hisashi always said she was such a crier.

Inko leant on the windowsill and gazed out at the rest of the world. There were drunks, hobbling home, arm in arm, down on the street.

As she opened her mouth to sing the chorus, more tears pricked at her eyes when those drunken souls began to kick at the puddles in the rain and sing along too.

"Hold me closer tiny dancer…"

If only Izuku had the bravery to sing along. His voice could change the world; Inko was sure of it.

A canary couldn't save any lives if it refused to sing.

Chapter End Notes

Songs used in this chapter:

Tiny Dancer - Elton John - Guitar Cover
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=De4rv4CtsnY

Oh and this fic will likely be updated every FOUR days - rather than three like in my last story - that was a little too demanding ha ha....

Also, miners actually really cared for their canaries and went to great lengths to ensure they *weren't* left behind in the mines when gas leaks occurred. I just didn't mention this above for *dramatic effect*. And also to signify how little Midoriya (aka the canary) thinks of himself at this point, believing no one would come back to save him. Of course this raises the question of exactly where the time skip actually occurs? Is it at the point I indicate with the line and the time stamp, or is it immediately after the radio show formatting ends? At what point in his life does Midoriya come to realise the canary doesn't have to be a martyr…?

The Greatest Adventures Start with the Humblest Beginnings

Chapter Notes

> Ok, guys - if the traitor is in class 1-A it's most DEFINITELY Hagakure. Like, there is NO other possibility. I mean, go back to the episode where the 'press' break in to UA. When the class is picking their president, Hagakure is legitimately not there. Like - GONE. No one even notices, which links into the whole 'no one ever notices me' thing that Hagakure does.
> Anyway I just thought I'd rant ignore me.
>
> BACK TO CANARY.
> Someone pointed out that it's a little unlikely that Midoriya has never sung anything before in his fourteen years of life. Yes, I know - he HAS and that will be an important factor in discovering the possibilities and limitations of his Quirk. The problem is that he never sang the right songs in the right way. Anyway, you'll see ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The fact that Midoriya wasn't to try for UA's hero course seemed to satisfy Kacchan. He certainly wasn't happy that Midoriya would be trying for any course at all in his dream school, but general studies would have to do. It's not like the two would often cross paths anyway – let alone *speak* to each other.

Midoriya eventually concluded that his mother knew about his poor relationship with Kacchan. Whether she had ever spoken with Mrs Bakugo about the matter was another story. Nonetheless, she didn't make him travel to the UA grounds alongside his old friend. That, unfortunately, didn't save the two from meeting at the gates.

Kacchan glared at him, "Stay out of my way, Deku," he hissed.

Midoriya didn't say anything at all. He stepped back frantically and let Kacchan waltz in ahead of him. A few of the other people around him glanced curiously as he stood, head down, just outside the gates.

Once Kacchan was out of sight, Midoriya shook his head and stepped

inside the school. '*I need to get a grip – I'm not going to be in his class anymore so there's no need to worry! Yeah, maybe words won't get stuck in my throat anymore and –'*

and he wasn't looking where he was going. He tripped up on a loose tile, about to fall face first onto the ground and make an absolute fool of himself in front of everyone!

But then suddenly the ground stopped growing closer to his face – no, he stopped – in mid-air.

"Are you ok?" someone laughed.

Midoriya almost yelped in surprise at the pink cheeked girl beside him.

"I stopped you with my Quirk. I would have asked first, but I figured you wouldn't mind me helping!"

He just stared at her.

She didn't seem to notice, only propping him upright, deactivating her Quirk and waving goodbye, before skipping off towards the hero course entrance examinations.

The hero course… A different world to his own.

Midoriya shook the brief thoughts of friendship and panics over actually interacting with a girl, to refocus on the upcoming exams. They would determine his future, after all – hero course or not.

There were two parts to UA's hero course entrance exam, a practical and a theoretical. However, for general studies, the soon to be students were instead given two papers, one far more challenging than the other. It was clear, as Midoriya's pen scribbled across the exam, that whoever set these questions did not intend for all the necessary knowledge to be in place. Some were far too advanced and complicated for your average middle school graduate to complete to their fullest extent. However, Midoriya was *not* your average middle school graduate.

Question Eighteen:

Explain how Quirklessness is inherited and how this can be identified by specialists.

It was practically made for him. To have the last question revolving around Quirklessness was to be expected, of course. This was the first year that UA had allowed Quirkless people to enter any of their courses. That included the hero course, but as many had said before, it was time Midoriya got his head out of the clouds and strived for a dream that was… more attainable.

Midoriya's mind raced as he batted the top of his pen against his lip, *'There are eleven marks available for this question. It's clear they want us to use medical terms and clearly describe the link between the lack of a Quirk and an extra joint in your little toe…'* he thought, before beginning to write:

Quirklessness is a hereditary condition caused by two recessive alleles. This means both the mother and father must have been a carrier of Quirklessness (or be Quirkless themselves) in order to have a Quirkless child, despite having Quirks themselves. This is because the gene that allows the expression of a Quirk is dominant, meaning if only one dominant allele is present, it will mask the effect of a recessive allele and produce a Quirk. The probability of having a Quirkless child if both parents are carriers is 25%. This probability isn't fixed because freak mutations can occur, resulting in Quirks entirely different to the child's parents in rare situations. Carriers of Quirklessness are increasingly rare, meaning the percentage of the population which are Quirkless is less than 5%. However, a majority of this number are rather elderly, and the proportion of Quirkless people who are of my generation is only around 20%. This means the percentage of people who are of my age and Quirkless is only 1%. Quirklessness can be difficult to diagnose as some Quirks can be 'invisible' and difficult to identify at a young age. However, for Quirk doctors, this can be a little easier. Autosomal linkage is where two genes are positioned very close to each other on the same chromosome (close to each other in DNA) and are therefore frequently inherited together. The recessive alleles of Quirklessness are inherited alongside an extra joint in the subject's little toes. A Quirk doctor need only take an X-ray to see if this joint is present in order to diagnose Quirklessness. The chance of having the extra joint and having a Quirk is rarer than Quirklessness itself (if you don't take into account any situations where the Quirk results in extra bones or joints being present). In genetic inheritance, chromosomes can cross over and exchange pieces of DNA during meiosis. However, the recombinant frequency of Quirklessness and having an extra joint is so low (because the alleles are so close together) that the inheritance of either gene separately is near to unheard of.

“Have you come across anyone particularly interesting in the entrance exams this year, All Might?” questioned Principal Nedzu.

The skeletal man sighed, “Unfortunately no. There were a few who received a good number of rescue points, but no one who made a particularly grand impression.”

“Hm, a shame really. But perhaps Sir Nighteye’s suggestion will do you well?”

“I hope so. I have faith in Young Mirio – he seems a promising candidate. But I fear that he’ll refuse the Quirk.”

The two were sitting in the Principal’s office. Yagi gazed at the results board for the first-year hero course exams whilst Nedzu happily finished marking the theoretical papers for general and business studies.

“It is a possibility. He has done so well with his own abilities recently and could wish for another, less fortunate soul, to take up your mantle.”

“Yeah… What about you, Principal Nedzu? Anyone you find… interesting, this year?”

“Why yes, I most certainly did!”

Yagi blinked in surprise. “You did? From the hero course?”

“No, no,” he smiled. “Quite the opposite. For you see, I put some particularly difficult questions in the general studies examinations this year, but one student has breezed through it all with no apparent difficulty. You should read his brief essay on the inheritance of Quirklessness – quite stunning! I would expect such an answer from a graduate of UA – not simply a future student!”

“Quirklessness?” Yagi frowned, accepting the paper from the principal. He scanned through the answer – neat handwriting and outstanding knowledge for someone of his age.

“Yes, but I would expect he’s done quite a bit of research into the matter, considering he’s Quirkless himself.”

All Might almost dropped the paper in surprise. “Quirkless? In his

generation?"

"If you read his report you'll find that only 1% of our population fit those parameters," the Principal chuckled. "To think we could have missed out on such a bright young man if we continued to not accept Quirkless people. I'm almost ashamed of whoever set the rule to begin with. However, it would have been necessary back along, when Quirklessness was more common."

All Might closed the paper and flipped to the front. He had a very high mark – only dropping a few here and there.

Izuku Midoriya…

Where had he heard that name before?

Midoriya's weekly schedule had been a busy one. Although, as he mastered instruments and dropped their lessons, he found himself with more and more free time. That was why, on a Thursday evening, he was wandering down the coastline, guitar bag in hand, looking for somewhere quiet and desolate to play.

He used to learn piano on a Thursday. It was guitar on Tuesdays – violin on a Wednesday. Mondays were always free, and so were Fridays. On Friday, his father called in from the United States. He would talk to his wife for a while before Izuku arrived and he would tell him about his week. Izuku never had much to say. He'd tell him about his music and revising for the entrance exams, but nothing more.

Saturdays and Sundays were reserved for dance classes. The thing is with dance, is Midoriya could never really get enough of it. It was awfully scary at first, but he soon realised that everyone else there was as frightened as he was to mess up or look like a fool. They learned routines, sometimes together, sometimes alone – never a master of one but decent at everything they tried. It was… fun. But God forbid anyone outside the club ever learning of Midoriya's past times. Kacchan knew about the drum lessons, but that was only because they'd bumped into each other there, and silently agreed never to speak of it again – not that it was too difficult for Midoriya.

Dagobah beach – what a tip.

The only ones around here to listen to Midoriya's music were the seagulls – and he was more than happy for it. Perhaps he should do something about all this rubbish. Midoriya supposed this stretch of coastline could have been beautiful without all the trash.

He wandered down onto the sand. Being careful where he trod, Midoriya made his way to the front of the piles of rubbish, so he could look out at the sun setting over the ocean. Precariously, the boy clambered to the top of one of the towering peaks of junk and sat down on top of what appeared to be an old microwave. He balanced his guitar case under his feet and checked to see if the instrument was in tune.

He sat there for hours, strumming along to whatever tune surfaced in his mind, watching the waves lap at the shore. Eventually, when the light of day was all but gone, he packed up his things and started to wander home.

He didn't see the familiar, gaunt man, sitting on the bench not far away, humming along to those same tunes as he watched Midoriya's silhouette, contrasted against the orange of the sunset.

Yagi smiled, "Izuku Midoriya, huh?"

He was one to watch – that was for sure.

"Izuku?! IZUKU!"

Midoriya frantically tossed off his shoes and ran inside, worried about what his mum might be calling him for at such a time.

"M-Mum?!" he replied, dropping his guitar in the kitchen.

"Ah, Izuku!" she exclaimed, hurrying into view. "Your letter – from UA – it's here!"

'But it's only been a few days…" he thought with a worried frown.

He couldn't quite tell if that was good news or bad news.

Midoriya accepted the letter and sat down on the sofa. His mother joined him, faltering as she asked if it was ok to see UA's response at the same time as him. He didn't protest, but his hands were shaking as he opened the envelope.

The letter fell out into his lap, the bold, golden logo of UA staring at him from the back of the message. Slowly but surely, he turned over the paper, and learned the nature of his fate.

Dear Izuku Midoriya,

Congratulations! It is with great pleasure that we at UA offer you a place in general studies class 1-C for the following academic year.

"IZUKU!" Inko cried, "You got in! I'm so *proud* of you!"

Midoriya merely grinned, his eyes never leaving the paper, transfixed on those first few words.

It was only after much squealing with delight from his mother that Midoriya was finally able to read the remainder of his letter. She hurried off to bring him a celebratory dinner, which he was certain she would have given to him despite the result. It spoke about the many opportunities that UA offered general studies course students – the close interactions with pro hero teachers and opportunities beyond graduating there. But after that, it was clear that the acceptance letter was more personalised than Midoriya thought it would have been.

Midoriya, you were the highest-ranking student in theoretical papers across all first-year examinations, with a staggering 91%, even against particularly challenging questions that even third years at UA would struggle to answer at the level of detail that you portrayed. We did not expect many of our candidates to exceed a mark of 80%, particularly when scoring points in tricky questions in the second paper. Most impressive was your answer to the question surrounding the inheritance of Quirklessness, portraying a scientific knowledge far beyond what is expected of someone your age. It was only when we checked your background that the reasons behind this became clear.

Midoriya gulped as he read on, fearing the worst – perhaps them saying that he needed to prove he was more than his Quirklessness if he hoped to succeed at UA. What if –

You will be the very first Quirkless student attending UA, should you accept our offer. But let us promise you that we will not let you down, nor permit any bigotry towards your condition or your selective muteness, as stated in

your medical records. If you have any questions or queries surrounding this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Principal Nedzu.

Midoriya hadn't noticed his mum leaning over his shoulder, reading the words as he did.

"This all sounds very positive, don't you think, Izuku?" she said cheerfully, pushing a bowl of katsudon towards him.

He hesitated, before putting the letter down and turning to his food. He smiled, "Yeah… I guess it is."

And his mother smiled wider.

But neither of them could have guessed what his start at UA would lead to.

Chapter End Notes

I don't know if I will ever give Canary One for All - it all depends on whether Mirio will accept it (And if Midoriya DOES get the Quirk - it'll probably enhance his current abilities rather than supplying him with All Might super strength but let's just see what happens!)
I have no idea what I'm doing.

On another note (ha, ha, pun),
I'm sorry this was a bit of a filler chapter but NO MORE - next chapter we're off to UA and then the story is officially ROLLING! And thank you SO MUCH for all the support I've gotten on this so far! We're almost at 100 bookmarks on the first chapter (99, oh how we're SO close) and it's just been amazing. So thank you - and I hope that this chapter isn't disappointing - I just needed to establish a few things :)

Fledgling Friends

Chapter Notes

> Just so it's made one hundred percent clear, I use a system when it comes to whether a character is speaking out loud, thinking, signing, etc:
>
> "This person is speaking out loud."
> *"This person is either singing or talking with great emphasis - or perhaps reading out loud."*
> *'This person is thinking.'*
> [*This person is signing*]
> "[This person is speaking and signing at the same time]"
>
> I just thought I'd make it extra obvious for you - if it wasn't already :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya took a deep breath and stepped onto the grounds of UA – he just couldn't believe he was *here!* At *UA!* The greatest hero school in all of Japan!

Wait, no – *no*.

He is *not* here to become a hero. He is here to learn and… maybe become a paramedic. Maybe. But he might have to get over the whole… muteness thing first. But he wasn't mute – really…

He keeps telling himself this, but the denial thing is starting to wear thin. At first, it was the truth – the only reason he wasn't talking was because it was just so much *easier* to just not say *anything*, rather than say the wrong thing. But then, it became harder and harder to get words from his brain to his mouth – and there are always so many things he wants to say; building up like water behind a dam. But that dam was getting near to impenetrable. Midoriya just hoped that one day it would burst – and when it did, it wouldn't be too dramatic and would be for all the *right* reasons. That's not too much to ask… right?

Right. Anyway – UA.

Clutching tightly onto the yellow straps of his backpack, Midoriya hurried towards the school. There were so many people there. They were all so excited, talking loudly to friends, new and old – wondering

what this new year would bring.

'Class 1-C… class 1-C… class 1-C – where are you?'

Wow, that's a big door. Are all the homerooms like this? They have to be – they wouldn't do something like this for a general studies class and not for a hero class. I wonder what Kacchan's class will be like…' Midoriya pondered.

He let the door slide open and hurried inside, trying not to make eye contact with any of his new classmates – he didn't want to get off to a bad start, *'Just stay quiet… keep your head down – and everything's going to be ok.'*

Midoriya found his nametag sitting on a desk near the window. It had a clip on the back of it. He glanced around to see some of the others were wearing theirs, so their name was displayed, loud and clear, to anyone who wanted to know it. Midoriya supposed he should do the same.

"Yeah, yeah! I was *so* sure I'd flunked it! I was kind of surprised when I got my acceptance letter after freaking out about it all so much!"

He looked up at the conversation occurring across the room. Most of his other classmates were standing together, discussing the exams they'd taken to get in.

"What was that one on hero laws? Like, I get this is a hero school primarily, but, come on, like we were supposed to know all that junk – this is general studies! Not *how to be a hero 101,* or whatever," complained a grumpy looking girl with straight blonde hair, fiddling with her name badge – *Sumiye Ohchi.*

"That one was ok – I was more stumped on the thing about Quirklessness," said the girl next to her – she had cat ears.

"I didn't even know people could still *be* Quirkless!" added another.

"Hey, bored looking guy! What did you think of the exam?" questioned the first.

Suddenly everyone was looking at Midoriya.

'Oh my God – I'm going to have to speak – what if they ask if I'm Quirkless? What if –'

“It was alright, I guess.”

Midoriya let out a sigh of relief. They were talking to the guy sitting *behind* him, with heavy eye bags and a head of purple hair.

Then they turned to Midoriya. “What about you?”

Fortunately enough, no reply was necessary, because seconds later, the door was thrown open, cutting into their conversation spectacularly.

“*GOOOOOOD* MORNING LITTLE LISTENERS!” *It was Present Mic*.

Midoriya thought he’d be able to *not* fanboy over every single one of his teachers *but it’s Present Mic!* His homeroom teacher was *Present Mic!* Midoriya listened to his radio show every day of the week!

It didn’t seem like the rest of his class were as enthusiastic as Midoriya was (then again, Midoriya didn’t exactly make that much of a fuss *out loud*) as they got to their respective seats in not much of a hurry.

“Welcome to UA’s general study course!” the voice hero exclaimed. “I’m your homeroom teacher – Present Mic. You might have heard my radio show and if you haven’t you should *totally* go check it out!”

Midoriya saw Ohchi roll her eyes from across the classroom. She certainly wasn’t much of a hero fan.

“*But* anyway, before we begin orientation… IT’S TIME TO TAKE OUR VERY FIRST ROLLCALL! Are you *ready?!”*

No one replied.

“BY THE END OF THE YEAR YOU *WILL* BE REPLYING TO THAT!” he insisted.

His new class didn’t seem very convinced. Midoriya certainly wasn’t.

When he started to call out names, Midoriya began to panic again. But the register ran much faster than he expected and he didn’t even have time to let his brain whir into overdrive before his name was called out.

“Izuku Midoriya!” Present Mic announced like he’d just won a prize.

Midoriya did nothing but shakily raise his hand.

“Ah, yes,” said Present Mic, “You know JSL, Midoriya?”

He nodded frantically. He had learnt Japanese sign language with his mother. She said that, if talking ever got too difficult, he could at least resort to a nonverbal communication. He’d been reluctant, but eventually complied. Midoriya had always had a knack for learning things like that. Words, dates, facts and figures – they all neatly organised themselves in his head, even if they didn’t often come out.

[*Are you ok with me telling everyone that you’re mute?*] Present Mic signed at a remarkable speed with over exaggerated hand gestures.

Midoriya hesitated, but supposed he had no choice other than to nod – his brain to mouth communication just didn’t seem to be working today.

“Ok, everybody – just to give you a heads up! Midoriya here is selectively mute – so he’s basically the opposite of me! There’s no pressure to speak around here, Midoriya – just come to me if you have any questions ‘cause I know Japanese *and* American sign language!”

Unsteadily, Midoriya managed to sign in reply, [*I know ASL too*]

“WAIT! Are you fluent in English?!”

Midoriya flinched, although, he supposed that wasn’t too big of a jump to make. He nodded – of course, his father had often spoken English to him at a young age. It had been over the phone, as he was rarely able to meet his family face to face, but the regular video calls had been enough to engrain the language in Midoriya’s brain.

Present Mic pointed at Midoriya dramatically, “NEW FAVOURITE STUDENT! You lot better catch up quick!”

Midoriya blushed furiously and sunk into his chair.

“OK! Moving swiftly forwards… Can we get a *YEAH* from Hitoshi Shinso?!”

The guy with purple hair behind Midoriya glared at the teacher menacingly. He caved after about a second, “Yeah…”

“AWESOME! How about a more enthusiastic one from… Maki Matsumoto?!”

“…Yeah?”

“CLOSE ENOUGH!”

There was a silent agreement across the classroom. This was the start of three *long* years. And how right they were – for all the wrong reasons.

“*ALRIGHT* listeners! We’re five minutes late for orientation so FOLLOW ME!”

Midoriya would have made sure everyone else left before him, but Shinso seemed to have exactly the same ideas and Midoriya didn’t want to get on the wrong side anyone… and this *Shinso* was certainly near the top of his list. His silence and hard glare just seemed to scream *stay away from me – or else*.

The first years were ushered to an assembly point just outside the school’s main building. Midoriya was quick to notice that they were positioned in order of class – from 1-H all the way up to 1-A. Wait, no, 1-*B*. Class 1-A was nowhere to be seen. It must have been Bakugo’s class, considering Midoriya couldn’t spot his head of spiky blond hair anywhere amongst the other heroics class, 1-B.

“Greetings to you all!” proclaimed Principal Nedzu.

Midoriya watched the creature’s beady eyes drift over the new student body as he spoke. The speech was long and tedious, revolving mainly around the promise within them and what good they could do for the world. Midoriya thought back to his acceptance letter. He had kept it; pinned it up on the wall next to his All Might poster. He hadn’t said a word about his Quirklessness being a disadvantage. In fact, the principal had held his condition at equal importance to his muteness. Midoriya didn’t know what it meant to him quite yet – or perhaps what it would mean for his future at UA… but… despite what he’d heard about Nedzu, despite all the comments of how frightening he was, Midoriya couldn’t help but look up at him with more trust than he’d placed in any other teacher he’d made an acquaintance with.

He could have sworn the principal’s eyes lingered on Midoriya’s green ones for a moment. They had never met face to face – but surely he could have found a picture of him somewhere. The Quirkless, mute student with the highest marks across the year. Yeah, that wouldn’t be at all surprising.

After the assembly was over, the departments were taken around the school separately, for a brief tour. Of course, general studies didn’t need to know where any of the specialised heroics rooms were, nor

the support classes. They were shown the cafeteria; where Recovery Girl's office was; where the changing rooms and gym were. Finally, when class 1-D separated from 1-C, Present Mic led them back to their homeroom, where Midoriya was reunited with his precious bag – which he had been thinking about this entire time. Of course, UA wasn't like his old school. He knew he wouldn't return to find it reduced to a mere pile of ash, but no one would blame him for being cautious.

"*So*, we have reached our intermission – i.e. LUNCH TIME!" Present Mic announced, "I *know* – we spent the entire morning listening to Nedzu, and trust me, it *never* gets old!"

His smile was rather fixed at this point.

"You lot know your way down to the lunch hall now – so you can head off whenever you want! In the meantime, I have to go and listen to Nedzu *again* in our annual first day staff meeting and find out if I won my bet – there's no *way* Eraser Head hasn't expelled anyone yet and I'M GONNA BE THE FIRST TO FIND OUT IF HE HAS! See you later, little listeners!" And with that, he was gone.

Instantly, chatter amongst his new classmates broke out around him. Midoriya had much preferred the silence.

"Ok, so I was talking to the people in class 1-D, and I couldn't find whoever had that 91%," Midoriya heard Ohchi tell her new friends.

He frowned at the revelation. 91%? Were they talking about the entrance exams still? Who managed to get *91%?*

'Wait –

'Wait, that's me.'

"So, whoever it is must be in our class," concluded a boy with darker skin and spiky, brown hair. His name tag read *Goro Tachibana*.

Midoriya got up quickly. There was no *way* he was going to waltz up to them and say, *yep, that's me!* Because, number one, he'd have to actually *say* that and he was almost positive none of them knew sign language. And number two, he'd *really* prefer to avoid the attention at this point. Or, at any point in the near future.

He scurried out of the classroom as quickly as he could, taking his bag with him – only to walk right into purple haired Shinso, who seemed

to have the same idea when it came to prompt evacuation from any and all social situations.

[*Sorry*] Midoriya quickly signed, fully aware that he wouldn't understand. He hoped that at least he'd register the hand movements as an obvious attempt at an apology.

"[Don't worry about it]"

Midoriya stared at him. Shinso could… sign? He'd spoken the words as he signed them – so logically, he had no problem with speaking or hearing. Midoriya didn't know what to think – there were about a dozen different questions he wanted to ask – well, sign. But before he could attempt any of them, Shinso walked away, not giving him a second glance.

Midoriya's mind raced. Shinso *clearly* wanted him to know that he understood sign – or else he wouldn't have bothered speaking and signing his response. He hadn't been cruel in anyway – and was clearly as averse to social interaction as Midoriya was. Or, at least, he was on the first day of school.

"You coming?" Shinso called back. He hadn't stopped or turned around to meet Midoriya's gaze, but it was clear that he was still speaking to him.

'*He's*… speaking *to me*…*'* thought Midoriya. It took a moment, but, just before he disappeared around the corner, Midoriya grasped tightly onto the strap of his backpack like it was the only thing tethering him to the Earth and ran after his classmate.

Midoriya stayed behind him as they walked to the cafeteria. Not a word was uttered between them – sign or otherwise – as they lined up for food. It was only when they reached the front of the line, that Shinso spoke again.

"What are you going to eat?" he asked, turning to Midoriya to see his reply.

He hesitated, glancing at the menu in panic. He had been so busy thinking about all the possible reasons for Shinso wanting to interact with him that he'd completely forgotten that he was lining up for lunch – which he would have to order – out loud.

[*I'm not p-particularly hungry*] he signed. Midoriya's hand movements were so jerky that it could really only be translated as a stutter.

[*Maybe just s-some of the rice?*]

They reached the front of the queue. “Can we have two bowls of the rice?” Shinso asked Lunch Rush. He indicated at Midoriya in a way of letting him know that he was ordering for the two of them.

Midoriya was so stunned that Shinso was actually helping him, that he didn’t even freak out over the pro hero Lunch Rush or acknowledge their brief conversation about white rice being a wonderful comfort food. Shinso didn’t even look at Midoriya again until they had accepted their food and paid, when he was double checking that Midoriya was still, well, *alive*, and that he was following him to a small table as far away from everyone else as he could find.

[*Thank you*] Midoriya told Shinso as soon as he had put down his tray on the table.

Shinso just shrugged, sat down, and started to eat.

Midoriya followed suit.

The two ate in silence for a while, before Midoriya couldn’t take it any longer. He tapped his chopsticks on the side of his bowl to get Shinso’s attention – which took a couple of attempts. [*Where did you learn sign language?*]

He could have asked *how* or *when* or, more usefully, *why* – but for some reason, it came out as *where*.

“From the internet,” he replied simply. “Sometimes… it’s easier to just, not speak.”

Midoriya stared at him again. He’d been doing that a lot over the short time that they’d known each other.

“I was never mute,” Shinso added after a moment’s thought, “It never got that far. But I thought sign language would be useful. It… lets people know that I won’t… do anything to them.”

Midoriya frowned, his confusion clearly displayed across his face.

“It’s my Quirk,” he continued. “It’s a villain’s power.”

[*No Quirk is a villain’s Quirk unless the holder is, themselves, a villain*] Midoriya insisted.

Shinso scoffed, [*It's brainwashing*] he signed. [*I ask a question – out loud. If someone replies, then I have complete control over them*]

Midoriya blinked at him, [*But that's an amazing Quirk! I'd love to have a power like that! You could so easily become a great hero with it!*]

"You really think so?"

Midoriya nodded frantically, before taking another mouthful of rice. It was awfully difficult to eat and sign. He would have gone on a tangent about all the good he could do with it if he had a few more hands. But his mother had often said that his muttering didn't translate well into sign. He always went too fast for anyone to understand.

"Well then, you'd be the first," Shinso smiled.

[*I'd love to have a Quirk like that*] Midoriya insisted. [*I would have gone straight to the hero course if I could!*]

"I failed the entrance exam," Shinso told him blankly. "They used robots. Mind control doesn't work on robots."

[*That's… rather unfair*]

"Yeah… Wait, didn't you take it too? You said you would have gone to the hero course if you could."

Midoriya hesitated. He wasn't planning on letting anyone know… But Shinso had been so kind to him – then again, it made him even more afraid that he'd turn away.

[*I'm… Quirkless*]

It was Shinso's turn to stare now. He stayed like that for a couple of minutes as Midoriya's cheeks flushed red and his brain filled his head with fog made of doubts and the unmistakable fear of abandonment.

"You're the guy with 91%, aren't you?"

And now Midoriya was staring again, [*How did you –*]

"I bet you aced that question on Quirklessness," Shinso grinned as he finished his rice. "I would say it's unfair. Then again, no one would be complaining if it was an essay on some kind of disease that I happened to have once and therefore knew more about it."

'He wasn't even referring to Quirklessness as a disease!' He even

confirmed that seconds later.

[*I didn't t-think you were*] Midoriya insisted.

"Are you going to keep everyone in the dark about you being the local genius?" Shinso smirked.

[*I'm not a genius*]

"Sure, you're not, Mr, I'm fluent in English and JSL *and* ASL, got the highest score in the theoretical tests across all departments and is already a teacher's favourite student – Midoriya."

And now Midoriya was blushing again, a profound realisation washing over him:

He had a *friend*.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for the support so far. I've also noticed absolutely no song suggestions - as per request on the first chapter - but now we're nearing the time where I'm planning future chapters where songs are needed, I might need to ask for SOME suggestions of songs and corresponding powers. Of course, I haven't explained Canary's Quirk yet, so you don't know exactly what will happen so... spoilers for anyone who wants to stay in the dark: Each song gives Canary a certain power up for a limited amount of time (there are a tonne of other parameters but I'll keep it simple for now) examples that I may or may not use could involve:
Firework by Katy Perry - Canary can shoot fireworks from his hands or something
Literally any song about fire, like, I don't know, Things We Lost in the Fire by Bastille (I think I AM going to use this song so yeah), giving Canary some sort of pyrokinesis
And so on...
So yeah, maybe the occasional suggestion could be beneficial - but please don't bombard me PLEASE!
And thank you again for reading :)

The Value in a Voice

Chapter Notes

Ok, so, I have many, many things to tell you all in the notes now - sorry.

1. I have finished planning this story! And it is WAY longer than I thought it would be. We're looking at 40 chapters at the moment, which is a number which is likely to grow as I put more detail into certain events and have to split up chapters, so, yeah - if you're planning on hanging around, you might be here for a while!

2. I just want to point out that the person who Aizawa expels in the Quirk assessment test is NOT Mineta. It's in fact whoever Midoriya's replacement was. Don't worry, Mineta does end up getting expelled eventually (spoilers) - just not yet.

3. My class 1-C characters are based on the people who talk to Shinso in the Sports Festival! You might recognise Ohchi later in the chapter as the grumpy girl who complains about the Sports Festival being a waste of time and that they were only there to make the hero students look good. Every character I use was either there or seen in the background at some point.

4. I've had a lot of comments wondering about whether Midoriya will get One for All or not, and honestly, despite the fact that it's an important plot point and I've finished planning the story, I'm still not one hundred percent sure, so, here's what we're going to do. The following link is to a poll I've created, asking Yay or Neigh for this very question. The side with the biggest number of votes at the end wins and is the direction the story will go towards. Thank you! :)

https://linkto.run/p/CTWCUPX1

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shinso didn’t know what he had been expecting from UA’s general

studies course. All he could think of when he entered class 1-C for the first time, was that he just needed to last until the Sports Festival. That was where he could make his mark – where he could show the world (or, more specifically, UA's principal, Nedzu) that he *deserved* a place in the heroics course. He just had to plough forwards, focus on his studies, and everything would be ok.

He had no plans on making friends. That would be a consequence on not planning on remaining in class 1-C for long enough *to* make friends. Even then, no intention crossed his mind of making more than an acquaintance with any possible classmates from the hero course. He had more pressing matters to attend to, that being, focusing on achieving his dream of becoming a hero. He'll show the world that he wasn't a villain – far from it.

But then that shy, bushy haired boy, the one sat in front of Shinso, caught his attention. He'd never met anyone else who found speaking more than a trivial part of everyday life; who understood its value and its consequences. Of course, there was bound to be a different reason behind this *Midoriya's* selective muteness than any issues Shinso had faced. But then he found out he was Quirkless.

He had no plans on making friends – really. Shinso just wanted to help him. The thing is with someone who had struggles speaking, is it often comes down to the people around them. He was curious – he wouldn't deny it. But being Quirkless? That made a lot of sense.

Suddenly, Shinso had found someone who he could really relate to – and not just on the problems with speaking front. It was an easy conclusion to make – Midoriya had been bullied at his old school (or possibly *schools*) for his Quirklessness, and, subsequently, developed some serious problems because of it.

He had no plans on making friends – but… maybe Midoriya hadn't either. And that's something else they had in common. And, well, Midoriya hadn't shown the slightest ounce of fear confronted with Shinso's Quirk (that might have been because Midoriya didn't speak and therefore wasn't easily mind controlled). He was the first person he'd ever met who learnt about his Quirk and didn't immediately link it with that of a villain. In fact, he said he could be a *hero*. And for just saying that, *Midoriya* was Shinso's hero.

"Did you hear?"

Shinso looked up from his phone. It was Kisho Shimizu. He had a twin

in class, Kana, so the two both awkwardly insisted they called them by their first names.

“A guy from the heroics course has already been expelled,” Kisho finished, eyes wide. Well, Shinso assumed they were. He had a hideous bowl cut, with a fringe so long that it covered his eyes.

Shinso felt his heart skip a beat – if someone had already been expelled, then there was a place open in the hero course.

Midoriya tapped him on the shoulder from behind. Shinso turned, only to see his friend sign, [*Present Mic won his bet*]

Shinso smirked, “Yeah, I guess he did.”

[*The person who was expelled must have been from Eraser Head’s class. I’ve heard of him – he’s so cool! His Quirk erases other people’s Quirks by looking at them – so he effectively fights Quirkless!*]

“That does sound kind of cool. How come I’ve never heard of him before?”

[*He’s an underground hero – they tend to avoid the press*]

‘*Sounds like the kind of hero I would want to be…’* Shinso thought. Yeah, he could see himself in Eraser Head’s class

“Hey, what are you two talking about?” interjected Matsumoto. He sat behind Shinso in class and was one of the few who still insisted on wearing those stupid name tags.

None of your business, was what Shinso was going to say.

“Oh, hi – Midoriya, right?” interjected Koneko – the girl with the cat ears, before Shinso could say those words. “Can you tell him I say hi?” she asked Shinso.

“He’s mute, not deaf,” Shinso retorted spitefully.

“Oh, sorry!” she exclaimed. “Is there something wrong with your voice or… what?”

Midoriya looked like he was absolutely ready to roll onto the floor and die.

Shinso was totally there with him.

“Rude much, Koneko?” snapped Ohchi. That girl was hardly ever in a good mood.

“*Sorry*,” the cat girl replied. She sounded somehow offended.

“Come on, Midoriya – let’s go to lunch,” Shinso insisted, already getting up and heading towards the door.

“Sorry about her,” Ohchi told Midoriya as he hurried after Shinso. “I’ve only known her for a couple of days and I can already tell that she’s too curious for her own good.”

Midoriya just nodded frantically and then almost ran out of the door behind Shinso.

They didn’t say anything, almost per tradition, as they walked down to the cafeteria. Shinso ordered for Midoriya – who had the same thing as he did, and they even sat down on the same table. Shinso could tell this would be exactly what they’d be doing for the next… who knows how long?

“I wonder what that guy did to get expelled,” Shinso pondered as Midoriya picked at his food. He didn’t seem in the mood for talking – not even in sign.

Shinso tapped his chopsticks on the side of his bowl, something he’d noticed that Midoriya did to get his attention. It seemed to work both ways, because Midoriya looked up almost immediately.

[*Are you ok?*] Shinso signed.

Midoriya just sighed and shrugged.

[*I know why you don’t like talking*]

His eyes widened, clearly worried about what Shinso might have concluded.

[*It’s because of your Quirklessness, isn’t it?*]

Midoriya’s body slumped, his body language confirming Shinso’s assumption.

“When I was in middle school,” he continued, staring down at his untouched food. “I had similar problems because of my Quirk.” Shinso didn’t wait for a response from Midoriya. “People just… as soon as they learnt about it – they would stop talking to me, because they

were worried I'd take control. They wrote me off as a villain before even getting to know me. When people don't talk to you… it becomes that little bit harder to talk to them."

Midoriya tapped the side of his bowl. Shinso looked up to see him sign, [*It's not that they didn't talk to me… I stopped talking because I hoped they would* stop *talking to me – stop noticing me all together. They didn't*]

"But then it became too hard to talk anyway," Shinso finished for him.

Midoriya nodded bleakly.

The two sat in silence for a moment, both staring into space – thinking about everything, yet nothing at all.

"I know what could cheer you up," Shinso said, making Midoriya jump.

[*W-What?*]

"Making up sign names for our classmates."

Midoriya grinned.

In sign language, specifically ASL, names had to be finger spelled unless they had a direct meaning, like Hope or Grace or something like that. So, instead of spelling out long names, people would come up with nicknames that had simple signs. It was easier in JSL, because the kanji could just be used – but that took the fun out of it.

[*Ok, so, forget Koneko – her name literally means cat so there's no point*] Midoriya started.

"No, no," interrupted Shinso. "*Everyone's* getting sign names. Forget kanji and proper meanings."

Midoriya laughed. Actually *laughed* – it took Shinso by surprise. It was the first sound other than the occasional surprised squeal that he'd ever heard Midoriya make.

[*Let's call Koneko… Curious*] Midoriya decided.

[*Ok, tamer than I would have chosen – but let's go with it*] replied Shinso, "What about Ohchi?"

[*Um… Grump?*]

“Definitely.”

[*No one else here known sign language, right?*]

“They would have said something.”

[*O-Ok. Who else?*]

“Honestly, I’m not great with names. I hardly remember anyone… Um, how about the twins, Kisho and Kana?”

[*Kana’s the one with the glasses, right?*]

[*We’re calling her Glasses, aren’t we?*]

Midoriya shrugged, still smiling broadly. [*And her brother can be…*]

[*Fringe*]

He laughed again, [*Fringe?!*]

[*Have you seen his hair? Terrible*]

[*What about the person who sits behind you in class?*]

“Matsumoto,” Shinso told him, “Um…” [*He can be Donkey*]

The laughter returned.

“What?! Don’t you think he looks a bit like Donkey Kong?!”

[*No!*]

They carried on like this for the rest of lunch – both barely eating anything, but neither of them seemed to mind. It had been a long time since Shinso really had this much fun with a friend, and it wasn’t hard to conclude that Midoriya thought the same way. What they were doing wasn’t particularly interesting… it was just – normal. Something that perhaps normal friends would get up to – laughing over stupid little things and making inside jokes that no one else would understand. But it wasn’t normal for the two of them. They had never really had the chance to do something like this before.

As lunch time came to an end and the two of them tidied away their trays and remaining food, Shinso could still see that beaming smile across Midoriya face – thoughts of rude questions and intrusive classmates left behind them.

Unfortunately, that euphoria couldn't last forever.

That afternoon, class 1-C joined up with 1-D for a joint sports lesson. Present Mic and whoever the homeroom teacher for 1-D was (Shinso didn't pay attention enough to care) had decided that they should do a team building exercise, so they could all get to know each other a little more, and that was why they were ushered into one of the school's massive 'gyms' (or just huge halls that the newbie heroes would fight in) to play team C verses team D dodgeball.

"THE RULES ARE SIMPLE!" Present Mic cried over the way too excited crowd of general studies students. "GET HIT ANYWHERE ON THE BODY AND YOU'RE *OUT!* Unless it's the head – because that's cruel! If you catch a ball, someone of your choice can re-join the game! Oh, and no crossing the line onto the other team's side! We're starting with your backs against the wall – run to the middle, grab your ammo and –"

"What about Quirks?!" called out Koneko.

"Err… For this first round we'll say YES to Quirks – as long as it's not going to seriously hurt anyone – we'll see how it goes and ban Quirks next round if it all goes wrong. OK! You have ten minutes or so to talk as a team and then we'll BEGIN!"

"Ok, guys," started Ohchi, who was clearly aiming for the class representative position they would be choosing in a few days' time. "Let's talk Quirks. Anyone got anything useful for this?"

Shinso could *feel* Midoriya freaking out beside him. Shinso wasn't faring so well either – he hadn't told anyone about his Quirk – he didn't want to make a bad impression… but… did it really matter? He had Midoriya – and it was clear he wasn't about to be driven away.

"My Quirk's absolutely useless," laughed Goro Tachibana, "all I can do is turn things orange for, like, a day."

"A *day?"* repeated someone else.

"Oh yeah, once at my old school, my friends dared me to turn the whiteboard orange, and then the ink in our teacher's pens, so nothing

would show up. I know it sounds kind of lame – but it was really funny at the time."

[*Can he turn himself orange?*] Midoriya wondered. He often used sign language as he thought. He would mouth words too, occasionally.

"Midoriya asks if you can turn yourself orange," Shinso told him.

Midoriya instantly blushed, clearly not expecting Shinso to repeat his thoughts.

"Err, yeah – if I want. I have more control over that – I can turn it on or off whenever I please," Tachibana explained.

[*T-Then why doesn't he turn our side of the pitch orange and then himself so he blends in?*]

Shinso repeated he plan out loud. The class was more than impressed.

They ended up going around the class, talking about Quirks and asking Midoriya to come up with strategies around them. He made rather mundane Quirks into a serious advantage. Shinso was shocked – but then he remembered. Midoriya was the one with 91% in the exam – he really *was* a genius.

Both Shinso and Midoriya were *very* relieved, however, when the other team complained that they were taking too long to strategize, and the teachers announced that the game had to start or they'd never have sufficient time to play enough rounds.

"THREE, TWO, ONE – *BEGIIINNN!"* Present Mic cried, and both teams charged towards the middle of the pitch.

Midoriya wasn't so keen, and hung back whilst the rest of them dove right in. Shinso did begin like the rest of them, but quickly hurried back to Midoriya as Tachibana turned the ground orange.

"Are you alright?" he questioned, picking up a spare ball that had rolled towards him.

Midoriya nodded, and then squealed rather loudly as he dodged a flying ball, which he seemed to register more as a missile rather than a soft ball.

"Sure?" Shinso insisted.

He nodded again, dodging another projectile. The other team

considered them good targets, considering they were standing still and hanging back. Midoriya, however, seemed to be *exceptional* at dodging. Shinso wasn't sure if this was a good or bad thing. He also wasn't sure what to think about how muscular his friend seemed. He looked so small and weak in his uniform – but his UA regulation PE kit showed otherwise – and Midoriya didn't seem like the kind to work out for fun or go for runs or something…

Team C won the first round of dodgeball, and the second. Shinso got hit in the head twice, but neither him nor Midoriya were hit out. The third round was more interesting. Team D quickly realised Tachibana's orange tactic and got him out as soon as possible. Kana and Kisho, who both had weak water manipulation Quirks, were banned from using them after the opposing team had a heated argument against them and Ohchi about pouring water on the balls so they could make their throws more accurate. Ohchi was hit out moments later, quickly followed by the twins, who now shouted very loudly at their remaining classmates.

Shinso stayed by Midoriya for most of the round. Midoriya had yet to throw a single ball and continued to dodge them expertly, whilst Shinso tried his hand at catching, mainly so he could let Ohchi back in so she would stop shouting at them.

In the end – Midoriya was the only one left, and as it turns out, throwing was *not* one of his strong points, and neither was catching. However, it was increasingly hilarious how worked up the last two members of class 1-D were getting. No matter how hard they tried, they could *not* hit Midoriya.

It wasn't very helpful that one of them managed to catch one of Midoriya's throws, and they chose to let back in one of their team members, who must have had some kind of accuracy or levitation Quirk, because the dodgeballs seemed to change direction mid air to zoom towards Midoriya.

"On my mark!" announced the team D player with the accuracy Quirk. His other two teammates stood, poised, next to him, dodgeballs in hand, ready to throw. "Three, two, one – NOW!"

Shinso winced as the three projectiles were aimed perfectly at Midoriya – he had no way to escape. Well, that's what everyone had thought – until Midoriya leapt at an exceptional height over the balls, did a front flip, and landed perfectly.

Ok, now the fitness is even more questionable.

“WHAT WAS *THAT?!”* it was Present Mic who yelled that. He’d been commentating the entire time.

The other team players were so stunned that the next throw was poor enough for even *Midoriya* to catch it.

“AND HE *CATCHES* IT!” Present Mic exclaimed.

[*Donkey*] signed Midoriya to Shinso.

They forgot Present Mic knew sign.

Both were very thankful that he masked his laughter with coughing when Shinso told Matsumoto to re-join the team.

It wasn’t long after that, that the last three members of class 1-D were hit out by Matsumoto, so 1-C reigned victorious, and undefeated.

“That was *amazing*, Midoriya!” exclaimed Koneko as the class surrounded him after PE – when they’d all gotten changed and gathered in their homeroom class to collect their things at the end of the day. “Who knew you were so, like, athletic?!”

“Your strategies were really good,” Ohchi admitted, “Better than anything I could come up with.”

“Yeah, thanks for helping me with my Quirk!” Tachibana added, “I’d never thought of using it for camouflage!”

Midoriya seemed rather overwhelmed – but he wasn’t freaking out as much as usual.

They showered him with praise; not asking too many questions so Shinso didn’t have to act as the translator that many times. But, before the clock quite reached the end of the day, the one question he had been so worried about was finally uttered.

“We never got to ask,” said Ohchi. “What’s your Quirk, Midoriya?”

“It’s like, intelligence or agility, isn’t it?” supposed Kana.

Midoriya looked to Shinso in fear. But Shinso never had to make that horrible decision to let his only friend out on his biggest secret.

“What are you all still doing *here?!*” exclaimed Present Mic as he

dramatically burst through the door. “I’d have thought you lot would hurry off home as soon as humanly possible!” he said, hurrying over to his desk to pick up a pile of paperwork.

“We were just talking, Sir,” explained Ohchi.

Present Mic’s gaze rested on Midoriya. “Ah, yeah! You were pretty awesome today, favourite student!” he said without shame. “You don’t need a Quirk to do stuff like that, huh?! Well, see you all tomorrow!”

He left as quickly as he had arrived, leaving a silence behind him. Shinso glanced back at Midoriya. He was shaking.

“Wait, you’re not… Quirkless – are you?” someone guessed.

Midoriya looked down at his bright red shoes in humiliation.

“Holy shoot – you’re *awesome*,” scoffed Watanabe, who sat next to Midoriya in class.

Midoriya actually jumped in surprise, looking up at him (he was rather tall) with wide eyes.

“Yeah, Present Mic’s right – you don’t need a Quirk to do all that cool stuff! I’ve got a Quirk, and I can’t do half of what you do,” added Tachibana.

“Midoriya’s the one with 91% in the entrance exam,” Shinso told them, resting a hand on Midoriya’s shoulder.

“I *knew* it,” sighed Ohchi. “I only got 73% - I bet you got all those marks in the Quirklessness question, huh?”

“And plenty of other stuff besides,” Shinso insisted with a menacing stare.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever,” she said with a wave of her hand. “Anyway, see you all tomorrow. I’m going to miss my train if I’m late again.”

Not a single person uttered a word against Midoriya’s Quirklessness. Shinso’s gaze scared off anyone who tried (specifically Koneko). Midoriya didn’t sign a word – but Shinso didn’t need that to tell that he was grateful.

They walked together out of school. Shinso could see a soft smile forming on Midoriya’s face.

“Well, see you tomorrow,” Shinso said as they were about to part ways. “Don’t worry about them knowing about your Quirklessness. I promise they won’t say anything untoward about it.”

Midoriya hesitated, before nodding. Satisfied, Shinso turned and to walk away. But, just before he could get any further, Midoriya reached out and grasped his shoulder.

Shinso turned, confused. That was when, in the smallest voice imaginable, his mute friend opened his mouth and whispered, “*Thank you*,” and nothing more – turning and walking down the street before Shinso even had the change to reply.

Shinso was quiet as he walked home. He didn’t say a word to his parents as he put down his stuff and shut himself in his room. He stood there, staring at the book on Quirklessness he had left open on his bed from the night before.

Midoriya was someone too afraid to speak to anyone. Shinso was someone that everyone was too afraid to speak to.

But, out of them all, the only one Midoriya would utter a word to…

…was him.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading!
I have one more thing to ask you. I need a few song suggestions which will have certain powers. I have ideas already, but it would be nice if I had some more from you lot! Powers include:
1. Levitation/flight/zero gravity (I have lots of ideas but you never know)
2. Fire (I always need fire stuff guys)
3. Sleep (like lullabies and whatnot)
4. Whatever else you think might be useful

Thank you again for reading! :)

EDIT — 20/02/2023

Hello reader! I’m just here to let you know about an oversight I

made when writing this story all those years ago:
Canary is not deaf nor hard of hearing, so it is not right of him nor Shinso to assign sign names to themselves or other people. He may be mute but he can still hear, so he has a name he can easily recognise and understand. Deaf people don't have that same situation, and so develop sign names for the reasons I explained in the chapter above. To gain sign names, they should be given to them by someone from the Deaf community. I do apologise to said community for this oversight, and hope it does not take away from their enjoyment of this story. I cannot realistically go back and change this after so long. All I can say is that I should have done a little more research before writing it. I could have said that Midoriya learned sign language from a deaf teacher, who assigned him the name Canary and that's where it stemmed from. The other bird names could have been running jokes that Shinso decided to base off the original Canary sign name - not said in sign, only in speaking.

If you would like to learn more about the Deaf community, I highly recommend this link to the home page for the National Deaf Children's Society. Again I apologise for the mistake, I have been educated and subsequently read into it and educated myself further, as one should do in these situations. I hope you still enjoy the story!

A Reason to Sing

Chapter Notes

The feedback on this story so far has really been incredible - thank you so much for the continued support!
The song suggestions were very useful, thank you - but there were so many that I couldn't possibly reply to them all! So, if I didn't, let me just say thank you here :)
Oh, and then the amazing Thoughtfullybeautifuwitch started some fan art after asking me what Canary's hero suit would look like! Which is just awesome, by the way.
I think I have enough song suggestions for a while so.... *pulls out a megaphone and stands on top of a roof* YOU CAN COOL IT DOWN NOW! XD
Then checking the 'should Canary get One for All' poll, I was surprised to see that it was a little more evenly split than I thought it would be, although it is still in favour of him NOT getting it - 59.5% to 40.5%. So, I think I might leave it up for a bit longer. If you want to have your say, click....

here!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There are some souls who live their lives to a constant beat. Nothing they do is out of rhythm, and this isn't meant in the context of someone who is perfectly organised in everything they do, for that is near to impossible. Life simply cannot be ordered with such precision. Instead, this rhythm is irregular. It has its ups and downs – times where it's in a minor key and where it transitions to major. This beat can be to an invention of the mind, or it can be well known – perhaps a song or two, or a hundred – shuffled on a mental playlist to an order which is not as random as initially anticipated.

Midoriya is one of these people.

He had only been attending UA for a few days, but already, there was a spring to his step and a song in his mind that he had not heard for far too long. Background music was what it was like. A soundtrack to his life, long since overdue. Now, everywhere he goes, songs creep up on him from the deepest depths of his mind – the tunes hanging just

past his lips, tantalisingly close to spilling out into reality.

Midoriya was considering putting in earplugs and listening to whatever song the radio decided upon as he approached UA's glistening halls. The gigantic building loomed up ahead of him. It wasn't as ominous as it once was – representing nothing but a dream forever out of reach. Now, UA was a place where he could find a future. Maybe it wasn't going to be where he had wished it would take him, but did that really matter? Right now, Midoriya was just happy to have gone there at all. The main reason for this, in fact, had just ran around the corner.

"Morning, Midoriya!" Shinso exclaimed. Midoriya had never seen him so… excited for the day ahead? No – he couldn't quite place it. Something about his whole demeaner seemed different. The bags under his eyes were lighter – was that it? His smile was that little bit brighter – more genuine – less of a smirk and more of an *actual* smile. Midoriya grinned back at him.

"Good morning," he said, and suddenly slammed his hands over his mouth. The words had just fallen right out – he hadn't even thought about it – no impending panic attack about the very thought of releasing the smallest sentence. It was… normal – like speaking was *supposed* to be.

Shinso's smile grew wider.

[*T-That was an accident*] added Midoriya, his hands fumbling over each other. He briefly wondered if his sign was even interpretable.

"What, Speaking?" questioned Shinso, his signature smirk returning to his face as he began to walk up the hill towards school, Midoriya walking faster than he usually would to keep up with him.

Midoriya hesitated. This was strange – it had been a long time since he was last able to talk so freely. Even talking to his mother could be a struggle sometimes. He would avoid it if he could. "Y-Yes…" he managed, before letting out a slight laugh.

"A good accident, I hope – and not that you were trying to *not* talk to me."

"N-No – not a-at all!" Midoriya replied. *'Oh my God – I'm having a conversation…'*

"So… why, um, why are you talking all of a sudden?" he asked

hesitantly, as if he was worried the question would put Midoriya off talking all together.

“I-I’m…” started Midoriya. He rubbed his throat, before glancing back at Shinso, who was still staring at him. “W-Well, um, usually, err – usually m-my-my throat gets all… clogged up – when I try to say something. So… n-nothing comes out.”

“Well, honestly, it meant a lot to me when you spoke yesterday,” Shinso admitted after a moment of silence.

Midoriya blinked at him, the confusion etched on his expression.

“You must be crazy,” he continued, “to only want to speak to the person who can brainwash you if you do.”

“I-I can deal with crazy,” Midoriya replied. It was getting a little easier – the more he spoke.

“Good,” Shinso laughed, “Because it’s only going to get worse from here, I promise you that.”

“I’ll hold you to that promise.”

They walked in silence the rest of the way to school. Yeah, it was silent between *them*, but as they reached the front gates, it was clear the rest of the world had other plans.

“Is that the press?” Shinso wondered aloud, voicing Midoriya’s own thoughts.

“Hey, you! You’re UA students! What’s it like having All Might as a teacher?” a reporter demanded, thrusting a microphone in the direction of Midoriya.

And the clog’s back.

“Back off,” Shinso snarled. “We’re general studies students – we’re not in the hero course. All Might doesn’t teach us.”

They backed off pretty quickly after that. Shinso grabbed Midoriya’s wrist and dragged him harshly through the crowd and finally into UA’s grounds.

[*I didn’t know he teaches here!*] Midoriya signed as soon as they were free from the crowd.

“I heard mutter from some of the others about it,” Shinso admitted. “Are you a fan?”

[*I… I was…*]

“You… were? What happened?”

Midoriya fiddled with his fingers, unsure of what to say. As they walked through the halls towards class 1-C, he took a deep breath, tugged on Shinso’s shoulder, and explained. [*I was attacked by a villain a while back – All Might saved me. Afterwards, I asked him if I could ever be a hero without a Quirk… he said no; that it was good to have dreams, but that I had to ensure they were… attainable*]

“He said that?” Shinso gaped. “I wasn’t a huge fan to begin with… I’m even less of one now.”

[*It doesn’t matter – really*]

“So, did you *talk* to him?” he asked as they entered their homeroom.

[*…Yes. I suppose it’s not so hard to speak to certain people. I don’t think I’d be able to speak to him now though. And that was over ten months ago. I found speaking easier back then. This whole… muteness thing only really became a major problem afterwards*]

Shinso sat down in his desk, [*I’m glad things are starting to get better now*] he signed. [*But you don’t have to pressurise yourself to speak. I can keep translating for you at school if you want – and Cockatoo can too*]

Midoriya sniggered [*Cockatoo?*]

“Present Mic, obviously,” Shinso smirked.

“What’s this about Present Mic?” questioned Ohchi. She sat next to Shinso in class, so Midoriya couldn’t blame her for overhearing.

“Inside joke,” Shinso replied, at the same time as signing: [*See this is the problem with speaking out loud – eavesdroppers*]

“Hey, Midoriya,” Ohchi continued, “I learnt some sign language after school yesterday. Is this right?” and so she signed, [*Hello, good morning, how are you?*]

“Depends on what you’re trying to say,” Shinso told her. “If you were trying to say: hello, good morning, how are you – then yes, but if not, then…”

“No, that’s obviously what I was trying to say,” Ohchi retorted in obvious irritation.

Midoriya, unsure of what to do in this situation, just gave her a nervous thumbs up. It was luckily all he had time to do before Present Mic burst through the door, in a dramatic manner that was becoming routine at this point.

“ARE YOU READY FOR ROLLCALL?!” he exclaimed.

No one replied.

“COME ON!” Present Mic yelled, “I wanna hear a YYYEEEAAAHHH!”

Still no answer.

“One day, one day,” he sighed, and started with the register.

Once he had finished, Present Mic *didn’t* disappear off to the teachers’ lounge as he usually did, and instead sat down in the chair behind his desk. “*So* – You lot have been here for a few days now, and hopefully you’ve all gotten to know each other! *That* means, it’s time to choose…. Drum roll please!”

No drum roll followed.

“…A class representative!”

It was a surprise to no one when the long and tedious task of choosing a class president resulted in Ohchi coming out on top. Midoriya and Shinso were more than glad when President Ohchi was told to stop her never-ending speech so lessons could begin.

[*I almost regret voting for her now*] Shinso sighed as he walked beside Midoriya to lunch.

[*I’m just glad I was allowed to opt out*] Midoriya signed in reply.

[*You could have been a great class representative*] Shinso insisted [*You’re really smart and everyone likes you. You don’t have to talk to take on all those responsibilities Ohchi was going on about*]

[*I think talking is expected*]

Sign language had many positives and negatives. First of all, it successfully allowed nervous, shy people like Midoriya to communicate without having to speak, and, because it wasn’t

commonly known, he and Shinso could have secret conversations whenever they pleased. Then again, having Shinso acting as his translator whenever their conversations *weren't* secret made him feel extremely guilty, although his friend insisted it wasn't a problem. Another downside was the fact that they had to be facing each other to talk, and both hands had to be free, that meant, when, for example, carrying trays, their conversations were cut short.

Shinso's audible sigh moments after paying for his meal made Midoriya jump.

"Our usual table is filled up," he explained. "We'll have to sit next to someone else."

While holding his tray, Midoriya couldn't reply, so all he could do was nod and follow Shinso as he wandered around the hall. Midoriya couldn't help but relate the situation to a couple of sharks swimming through shallow waters – the thought made Midoriya chuckle softly under his breath.

"Mind if we sit here?" Shinso said eventually, drawing Midoriya out of whatever dream world he'd entered.

"Not at all! It seems rather crowded at the moment, doesn't it?!" replied the rather energetic boy Shinso had sat down next to. Midoriya could already see the annoyance in his eyes.

"So, anyway, Iida, you're going to make a great class representative – no need to worry about it," the girl Midoriya ended up sitting next to said, finishing whatever conversation she had been having. "Oh, hey – I know you!"

Midoriya flinched in surprise, turning to the girl.

"We met on the day of the entrance exam, right?" she confirmed.

He nodded frantically, pinning the familiarity of her face to the girl from his first few moments at UA – who stopped him from falling with her Quirk!

"I'm Uraraka, and this is Iida!"

"Nice to meet you both! What class are you in?" polite Iida immediately questioned.

"1-C," Shinso answered simply, digging into his food without a further

glance at the two.

“We’re in 1-A!” said Uraraka happily. “What are your names again?”

“Shinso – and Midoriya,” he replied, pointing to Midoriya as he said his name.

His throat felt dry. It was strange, how earlier that morning his voice had felt freer than it had ever been, but now, as soon as he was exposed to a more social situation, the wall separating his mind from his mouth was thrown up again, closing him off from the outside world.

“Has anyone been expelled from your class yet?” Uraraka asked Midoriya. Yes, she was *definitely* asking Midoriya, she had turned to face him and everything. “We’ve already lost *two* people!”

“No, general studies isn’t like the hero course,” Shinso said bitterly.

“Although, I heard the examinations for entrance to general studies were quite strenuous!” Iida added.

“They were fine.” Shinso was clearly getting quite aerated by the unwanted interaction.

“How did you find them?” Uraraka asked Midoriya – she was clearly trying to involve him in the conversation.

“Midoriya’s selectively mute,” Shinso snapped.

Silence followed.

Midoriya pocked his rice with his chopsticks glumly. Curse his stupid mouth – why wouldn’t it open when he wanted it to?

“Oh, I’m so sorry!” Uraraka suddenly exclaimed.

Midoriya could do nothing but smile and sign an apology that Shinso translated for him.

“You know, sign language could be super useful for heroics!” Uraraka said, turning to Iida; changing the conversation abruptly.

“Yes, I suppose it could. I wonder if Mr Aizawa will let us set something up to allow the class to learn it,” he wondered aloud.

“Yeah, then we could talk properly!”

That was when a loud, blaring noise filled their ears.

Midoriya squealed and covered his ears as the person on the other side of Iida explained the significance behind the sudden alarm.

With Midoriya's ears ringing, Shinso dragged him out of his seat and down the halls. A rapid influx of people barged between them, pulling the two apart. Panic set in – it was a toxic mix of fear from the alarm and an anxiety driven from being separated from Shinso.

Someone's elbow rammed into his head.

"Ah!" it was Uraraka, "Sorry!" she exclaimed once she realised who it was.

The two of them were pushed up close to the window overlooking the entrance to the school.

Midoriya pulled on Uraraka's shoulder and directed her gaze towards the outside. There were the press, crowding an agitated Present Mic and a scruffy looking teacher with long black hair.

"It's the press!" Uraraka exclaimed. She called out for Iida, who's head appeared over the crowd, not far from where the two were standing.

[*I have an idea!*] Midoriya signed to Uraraka on impulse.

"I'm sorry, I don't understand!" she replied.

"Everyone, calm down – it's just the press!" Iida cried, but his voice couldn't be heard over the din the rest of the student body was making.

Midoriya knew what he, well, they, needed to do. He remembered Uraraka's Quirk – she made him float back at the entrance exam! If she could make either herself or Iida float above the heads of everyone else, they could get their attention.

He tapped Uraraka's shoulder again, [*Float*] he signed.

"I don't understand sign language!" she repeated.

Midoriya pulled at his hair. '*Come on, guess!*' [*Float!*] he tried again. It was a simple sign – surely it looked enough like it meant *float* for her to understand?!

But after yet another fail, Midoriya grasped her wrist, pulled her in

close to his face and uttered the word, *"Float."*

"Float?!" she repeated.

Midoriya's eyes widened. He hadn't processed what he was doing – did he really just manage to speak to a stranger?!

Iida must have heard what Uraraka said, because he reached out his hand over the crowd and yelled, "Make me float, Uraraka!"

And so, she did.

Midoriya was stunned to see the engine exhaust pipes sticking out the bottom of Iida's legs. With a boost from his Quirk, he went spinning across the heads of the students of UA and crashed into the wall above the exit sign.

As he yelled his explanation at them, the pushing and pulling of the crowd halted, and Midoriya could breath a sigh of relief.

Shinso pushed through the crowd and made it to their side. "Are you ok?" he panted.

Midoriya nodded furiously, still ecstatic that he had managed to overcome that blockage in his throat and communicate with Uraraka. She was still focusing on making sure Iida made it safely to the ground before realising her Quirk.

[*I spoke!*] Midoriya told Shinso excitably.

[*To her?]* he frowned.

Midoriya nodded and actually bounced on the spot.

"That was a really good idea, Midoriya!" Uraraka exclaimed as the crowds began to part.

[*Thank you*] he signed and Shinso translated.

This was immediately followed by Midoriya teaching Uraraka how to sign thank you, whilst Iida hurried over to them.

"Shall we go back to our seats before our lunch gets cold?" Iida suggested.

"Sure!" replied Uraraka. "Look, this is how you sign thank you!"

[*What did you say to her?*] Shinso questioned as they all walked back to the cafeteria.

[*Only the word float. She couldn't figure out what it meant in sign and I was really frightened that you'd gone! I'm surprised I managed to say it…*]

"Oh, what were you trying to sign to me earlier?" Uraraka questioned. "Did that mean float?"

Midoriya nodded.

"Can you show me again?"

The rest of lunch break consisted mainly of teaching Uraraka and Iida various words in sign. Despite the panic derived from the press' *attack*, by the end of the day, Midoriya wouldn't hesitate to admit that it had been one of the best days he'd had for a long, long time.

And it wasn't over yet.

Although, it didn't take long for Midoriya to realise Shinso seemed a little… off – as the day ended... No, it couldn't be – was Shinso… *jealous* of Midoriya speaking to Uraraka?

[*Thank you for helping me today*] Midoriya told him as the two of them left school.

"What did I do again?" he sighed.

Midoriya took a deep breath, "Y-Y-You gave me the courage t-to speak."

Shinso's eyes widened; whatever emotion he could have been storing up immediately tossed to the wind. "I did?"

"I-I don't think I could have e-ever done that if-if you hadn't been so kind to m-me."

It was clear his friend didn't quite know how to respond.

"I could only say one w-word. B-But that-that's one word more than usual," he laughed meekly.

"Hey! Wait up you two!"

Midoriya jumped as he and Shinso turned. It was Uraraka again, with Iida jogging by her side.

“Are you guys heading off to the train station? We’ll come too!” she explained.

“I don’t go all the way to the train station,” Shinso admitted, “but Midoriya does.”

“We should walk together after school – would that be cool?” Uraraka questioned Midoriya.

He nodded briskly, but then hesitated, and glanced at Shinso. His friend smirked at him and gave him a reassuring nod.

“Y-Yes,” Midoriya stammered.

The two hero students looked like they were about to cry. Iida even clutched his heart. They barely knew Midoriya – but speaking meant this much to them?

The four talked animatedly as they wandered slowly towards the train station. Midoriya’s comments were few and far between, but he was just honoured to feel so included. Iida and Uraraka explained that they had researched what selective mutism was between lessons that afternoon and were just so thrilled that Midoriya had managed to overcome his mental barriers to speak with them after such a short space in time. Midoriya was quick to make sure they knew Shinso’s part in all this. He wasn’t sure if it was really their openness that allowed him to speak, or more his trust in Shinso.

Midoriya would admit to being more than a little fearful when they parted ways with Shinso; he was so worried that as soon as his friend was gone, the clog in his throat would return. But, although he could *feel* it there, somehow he could still push past. His sentences were filled with more stutters; he spoke slowly and quietly. But Uraraka and Iida were patient.

And as Midoriya stepped off the train and made his way home, that spring in his step was oh so much clearer.

“I’m home, Mum!” he called out as he closed the door to his house behind him.

“Izuku!” she exclaimed as she hurried into view; her face displaying a rather shocked expression. “How was your day? You seem… really happy!”

“Um, yeah!” he replied, putting down his rucksack and taking off his

tie. “I, err, I talked to Shinso.”

“You *talked?!”* Inko cried. “Really? Izuku! I’m so proud of you!”

“It’s really nothing, Mum.”

“It isn’t?!”

“I m-mean, um, well – I managed to speak to a couple of other people as well.”

“Who?!”

“Um, Iida and Uraraka? They’re in the hero course. Maybe they know Kacchan…”

She squealed something that Izuku couldn’t have possibly deciphered as she pulled him into a hug. “I haven’t started making dinner yet – but how about Katsudon? I know it’s one of your favourites!”

“Oh, ok!” he replied. “But, um, I’m going to go get changed out of my uniform first, then maybe go out for a bit?”

“Where?” she asked in curiosity.

“Oh, um, I just found this empty stretch of beach not far from here. It’s really quiet; I just want to go mess around on my guitar for a bit?”

“Of course, Izuku,” Inko replied fondly. “But be back soon. You wouldn’t want your dinner to get cold – and it looks like it might rain in a bit.”

“Ok, Mum!” and with that, he pulled on the first set of clothing he located in his draws, grabbed his guitar case and ran out the front door.

Inko gazed fondly out the window as her son rushed off to reach the beach he mentioned before it rained. He always loved to play whenever he was feeling emotional. Whether it was because he was sad or angry, or, apparently, really happy! It had been so long since she’d seen him like this. It was about ten months ago, after he leaped in to pull Katsuki away from that sludge villain attack, when he truly

began to fall silent. He hadn't been great before – always fidgeting and stuttering, dreading the dawn of a new day, but it just got worse and worse as time went on. She was glad she'd convinced Izuku to take the entrance exams to UA, despite not being able to shoot for the hero course. This could really be the start of something wonderful.

His Mum was right about the rain. Midoriya couldn't see the ocean in its true majesty because of the looming clouds. But he didn't care. He was looking forward to the tranquillity of the trash covered beach of Dagobah. He didn't mind its filthy state if it meant he could play whatever he wanted without disturbing anyone. He also knew that his mother wouldn't have minded him playing in the house, in fact, she seemed to rather enjoy it – but Midoriya just wanted to be alone that evening, after such an eventful day.

He sat on top of the same pile of garbage that he had the first time he ventured into the sandy wasteland; leaving the case of his guitar by the abandoned boardwalk. Thunder crackled above him, and the clouds' first teardrops trickled down Midoriya's cheeks. Too late to hurry home, he just sat there and let the heavens open above him, not a thought concerning the welfare of his guitar crossing his mind. He'd left it out in the rain before. It certainly hadn't been too happy about the ordeal, but the water didn't have any long-lasting effects. Perhaps a certain waterproofing had been done to the wood.

Despite the heavy clouds, Midoriya could still see the slightest hint of the fading day – an orange that swept across the sky; illuminating the raindrops and swelling waves ever so slightly, in a way that gave the illusion of fire, rippling across the ocean and the sky.

He smiled and began to play the first song that crossed his mind. It was a song that perhaps he would come to regret, but, at the same time, look back on with a grin wider than the one he sported at the moment.

~Set Fire to the Rain – Adele~

This would be because, as the first chords rang out over the beach, something stirred in Midoriya's mind; swirling in his chest. It was a feeling that had always been there, an emotion of sorts that he only felt as he began to play his music, it was one of the reasons that he loved it so much. He just felt like he belonged to the rhythm. It was where he could forget the world and immerse himself in an entirely new one of his own. There was a lightness about this feeling today. It rose up, past the familiar clog in his throat, washing it away. And this was why, with a thought back to the friendly faces he had become accustomed to seeing – that of his *friends* – his confidence budded, and he opened his mouth.

And he *sang*.

"*My hands – they're strong. But my knees, were far too weak…"*

He let his voice echo across the beach – filling every crevasse, nook and cranny. He loved the way it reverberated in his chest; a feeling long lost within him. He had sung before, of course, everyone had at some point, whether it was simply humming along to the radio or a gleeful chorus of happy birthday at a friend's party. His mother had said there was something about Izuku's singing – a certain magic to it that no one could quite describe. It was as if he always conveyed the meaning of a song; brought out the emotion it intended into the world around him without a clear effort. But never before had he truly poured himself into a song like he did on that day.

"*…I set fire – to the rain. Watching it pour…"*

It was as though he was playing an ancient instrument – one he'd had with him for as long as he could remember, but never had the confidence to test and try. His throat felt sore and raspy from underuse, but somehow the music pushed through.

"*When I lay, with you…"*

Midoriya gazed into the distance, eying the horizon as the sun continued to set. There was a break in the clouds now. Not enough to stop the rain nor to blind him with the fading sun, but enough to see its hazy silhouette above the Earth's curvature.

The rain wetted his hair and made the strings of his guitar slippery and difficult to navigate. Whether he struck a wrong note at some point or not, he could never have known. He was so lost in the music that it just didn't concern him anymore. Neither did the clinging of his clothes to his skin, or the salt of the air stinging on cracked lips.

The rain – it glowed with the light of the sunset – it was so bright that each droplet could have been a star of its own. His mind played tricks on him when the drops sizzled as they landed on his guitar.

And then the second chorus began.

"*But I set fire – to the rain!"*

And the rain – it *burned.*

The music came to an abrupt stop as Midoriya yelled, falling down the pile of rubbish he had perched upon and into the water below. With the sound of the song gone, the flames too, began to fade, put out by the rain which no longer fuelled it.

Midoriya sat there breathing heavily in fear, knee deep in the ocean as the waves tossed the salted water over his back. His guitar had fell a few feet away from him. Slowly, he clambered to his feet, waded through the water and retrieved it.

It was covered in scorch marks.

Midoriya blinked as he stared up at the sky and felt the rain pitter-patter against his face. The sun had set. The light illuminating the clouds had gone.

So why had the rain continued to glow?

Did he hallucinate? Why was his guitar covered in spots of black soot whilst his skin remained unharmed? Why did the beach continue to smoulder around him? Hot pools of water seeped into his shoes as he climbed out of the sea and back onto the beach.

Midoriya fell to the ground by his guitar case. He tested the water that had collected inside of it – hot – almost too hot to touch.

"I set fire to the rain…" Midoriya mumbled as the water fell heavier down on his head.

It was in this moment, that Midoriya's troubled mind drifted back to his entrance exam to UA – and to his answer to a certain question:

…However, the recombinant frequency of Quirklessness and having an extra joint is so low (because the alleles are so close together) that the inheritance of either gene separately is near to unheard of.

"Near to unheard of," he said out loud to himself. "Near to…"

Not impossible.

Rare – but *possible.*

He tilted back his head and cried, one last time, "*I set fire! To the rain!"*

But nothing happened.

'*You're going crazy… Something must have leaked from the garbage – burned the guitar. And the hot water was just from the sunlight heating it up… yeah – definitely,'* Midoriya reasoned pacing back and forth.

But… What if it was his singing?

Midoriya pulled out his phone, struggling to unlock it in the pouring rain. His mum hadn't messaged him quite yet. He still had time before he had to head home.

He bit his lip… there's got to be a way to try this…

And so, he tapped on his downloaded music, and managed to reach the playlist created for his dance class – filled with normal and karaoke versions of hundreds of songs that they'd danced to over the years – and he tapped on the song he'd been looking for.

A smile returned to his face as the familiar beat filled his ears.

~Walking on Sunshine – Katrina and the Waves~

"*I used to think maybe you loved me; now baby I'm sure…"*

He let himself prance across the sand, jumping on top of half buried objects discarded there years ago. He twisted in the air; thoughts of a burnt guitar lost once more to the back of his mind as the upbeat rhythm consumed him.

"*Now every time I go for the mailbox, gotta hold myself down…"*

He laughed dragging his feet in the sand as he almost tripped over an old tire.

The rain had drenched him at this point, and his dip in the ocean

hadn't helped. But now he couldn't even feel the coolness of the rain as it grew heavier still. He was completely lost in his dance – not caring about the squelching of his shoes and the sand stuck to the back of his trousers.

"*Now I'm walking on sunshine! Woah!"*

And that was when the clouds right above his head parted, and a beaming ray of sunlight illuminated the spot where he stood, following his every movement like a spotlight.

And as the chorus ended, laughing in extasy, he fell to the ground and turned off the music on his phone.

The sunlight faded once more.

Now *that* couldn't have been a coincidence – the sun had already set!

Midoriya's mind raced – thoughts of what would happen if he had kept singing mingled with what other songs could do and –

'*…oh my God – I have a Quirk!'*

He leapt to his feet and screamed it to the sky, "*I HAVE A QUIRK!"*

His phone buzzed – it was his mother, wondering where he was.

A grin still plastered across his face, Midoriya raced back over to his guitar case, zipped it shut, grasped its handle and took off. He ran nearly all the way home; only stopping when he had run out of breath.

He trudged inside and closed the door behind him.

"Izuku! What happened? Did you really stay out in the rain?!" his mother cried when her son walked back in, dripping water everywhere. But then her gaze reached the expression on his face.

"What happened?" she demanded, "Izuku – you're scaring me!"

"Mum," he said shakily, shivering in the cold, but he didn't mind. "Mum, I-I have a Quirk."

"B-But… But that's impossible – w-what – what is it?"

"Singing," he breathed.

“S-Singing? B-But – What about your toe joint?”

“It’s possible,” he explained, dropping the sodden guitar case by the door and pulling the instrument out, tipping excess liquid out of it and dropping it up by the radiator so it could dry. “Rare, very rare – but not impossible, so, by definition,” he said, grasping Inko’s shoulders, “*possible.”*

Tears welled in her eyes, “A-Are you sure, Izuku?”

“Mum, I sang set fire to the rain and –” he held up his scorched guitar, “I *set fire to the rain.”*

She stroked the spots of ash on the instrument, gazing at the black substance left behind on her finger. “Y-You have a Quirk,” she stammered, before she let her tears flow, “Y-You *sang!”*

And then Midoriya was crying too, tears mixing with rainwater and the salt the sea left behind on his clothes.

But that, was only the beginning.

Chapter End Notes

The songs used in this chapter were:

Set Fire to the Rain - Adele - Cover by Boyce Avenue
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9o64xyjGWA

Walking on Sunshine - Katrina and the Waves - Cover by ABANDON
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8q_sOZkQEU

Some sign used in this story isn’t sign that traditionally exists, in particular the highly specific bird names that will be propping up. I know it isn’t in tune with reality and I’m sorry about that, but I thought it would be really fun! So if you wanna make it feel more realistic for yourself (in the super hero fanfiction) you can say they’re making up the signs, or the version of sign language they’re using has changed since our time, or Midoriya had a slight obsession with birds when he was younger and looked up ornithology signs made up by other people!

A Reason to Fly

Chapter Notes

I'M HERE TO RANT ABOUT CANON MANGA STUFF!

Ok, so, we know Shinso's going to be joining either class 1-A or 1-B for the start of the next year (that technically makes it 2-A and 2-B, but whatever) but that's going to be really awkward - where will they put his chair in either room?! Both classes are full and Aizawa has yet to expel someone!
Easy solution - expel someone.
Why? Well they find the traitor of course (cough, cough, Hagakure, cough)
So, the TRAITOR ARC IS COMING PEOPLE!

Anyway, ignore me - back to Canary:

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya woke up before his alarm the next morning. His dreams had been busy; although he couldn't remember the details, he knew they had to be about his Quirk *somehow*. He just couldn't stop thinking about it – all those years spent analysing Quirks and picking at their strengths and weaknesses; *finally*, he had the chance to do that for his very own.

Although, he still wasn't completely convinced he had a Quirk at all. Perhaps it had just *all* been a weird dream. But then Midoriya saw his guitar, still balancing against the radiator by the front door. And he saw the black spots covering it in its entirety – yeah, not a dream.

That was when the idea hit him. Before hurrying out of his house to begin the new day, Midoriya raced back to his room, grabbed his portable speaker and shoved it in the bottom of his rucksack.

"Mum?!" Midoriya called out as he stood by the door, ready to leave.

"Yes, Izuku?" she replied at a much lower volume, reappearing right next to him at such a speed that Midoriya briefly wondered if her Quirk included teleportation.

"Oh, um, I just wanted to say that I might be later home than usual today," he warned her.

“Are you going to that beach again?” she frowned.

“I-If that’s ok?” Midoriya stammered, gripping the straps of his rucksack nervously.

“Well, honey, if you really think y-you have a *Quirk* – then you need to be exploring it somewhere a little safer…”

“Dagobah’s fine, Mum! Really, I’ll be safe – I promise.”

“Yes, but, other people might not be,” she acknowledged, glancing at the burnt guitar.

“O-Oh…” Midoriya said, following her gaze, “I suppose not.”

“Why don’t you ask UA?” she suggested hopefully. “They could help you register it!”

“Um… yeah, I’ll see if I can practise there then,” he agreed.

Inko teared up and threw herself into a hug, “I’m so proud of you, Izuku – you know that, right?”

“Thanks, Mum. See you later.” He pulled away after a moment and hurried out the door, leaving his mother staring after him, gripping the fret of his guitar fondly.

“There he is!” Uraraka exclaimed as Midoriya ran up the hill towards them.

Shinso wasn’t too sure what he thought of Uraraka and Iida. The three of them had been waiting for Midoriya to arrive for the past five minutes, with Iida getting increasingly worried about being later than ten minutes early to homeroom.

Uraraka was definitely the one he preferred out of the two. She seemed light-hearted and kind; easy to befriend and easy to understand. But, just like Iida, she had it *too* easy. Neither of them had faced the troubles that Shinso had in terms of reaching for their dreams. Then again, it was nothing compared to Midoriya. He tried to hide it, but it was clear to see – Midoriya would have loved to be a hero, but his lack of a Quirk held him back. Shinso couldn’t help but

wonder how different life would have been for Midoriya if he had just been born with a power of his own.

“Did you miss your train or something?” Shinso questioned, eyeing the pair of green headphones hanging around Midoriya’s neck.

“N-No,” he replied. He was getting more confident with his speaking. Shinso couldn’t help but feel a little bubble of pride rising in his chest. “I-I just got a l-little lost in thought.”

“What were you listening to?” Uraraka quizzed as Iida encouraged them to hurry up and head towards school.

“Um – here,” he replied, before pulling off his headphones and handing them to Uraraka. She accepted them eagerly, standing close to Midoriya so the wire wouldn’t pull them off.

They walked in silence for a moment as Uraraka judged whatever she was listening to. “This is such a cute song!” she exclaimed rather loudly. “Oh! Was I shouting?” she giggled after taking them off and handing them back.

“You should be cautious with the volume of your music!” Iida instructed, chopping the air with his hand as he did so. “Too loud and you could damage your hearing!”

“S-Sorry!” Midoriya squeaked as he turned it off, leaving the headphones around his neck.

“What was the song about?” Uraraka questioned. “Like, I think I’m *ok* with English, but song lyrics are just *beyond* my capabilities if they’re not well known anyway.”

“Oh, um, it’s called Wings,” he answered.

“Midoriya’s fluent,” Shinso told her after he neglected to do so.

“Wait, in English?!” Uraraka gaped, “I thought we were still talking about the song for a moment there – but seriously?! Could you help with my English homework? Present Mic is *way* more confident in our abilities than he should be.”

“As UA students, it’s understandable that he thinks highly of our skills!” Iida interjected.

“Skills that still don’t exist,” she laughed.

The media had given up on standing on the school's doorstep, so thankfully it wasn't as much of a struggle to get through the gates this time around. The two hero students waved goodbye to Shinso and Midoriya as they reached the door to class 1-C. Uraraka was still humming the tune to Midoriya's song as she skipped away.

For Shinso, the rest of the morning went by like any other ordinary day at UA. Midoriya however… seemed distracted. He kept muttering to himself – nothing out loud, but the movements of his lips clearly indicated that his mind was transfixed on *something*. He kept scribbling things down in a notebook; periodically scrolling through his phone and occasionally putting on his headphones to listen to something for a while. However, it clearly wasn't for his enjoyment – the serious look on his face as he did this suggested otherwise. Shinso decided not to pry. If Midoriya was willing to tell him, he would, given time. That was the thing with Midoriya – you had to be patient. Wait your turn, and it would be worthwhile – rush him into anything, and you would end up in a worse position than where you started.

But Shinso would be lying if he said that he didn't have his own distractions to consider. The Sports Festival – it was just around the corner. Only a few weeks, and his moment to shine would arrive – his chance to finally get out of general studies. He hadn't been there long, but he was already sick of seeing the hero students waltz to class, hero costumes in hand. His only regret was that he wouldn't be able to bring Midoriya with him.

However, as the day drew to a close, Shinso suddenly found himself with a reason to be happy to *not* be in class 1-A.

When Present Mic and a majority of UA's faculty members charged out of their lessons halfway through the day, leaving class presidents in charge without a hint as to what was going on, the collective student body began to panic. When they returned, class 1-C was told what happened –

The hero course was attacked during a rescue training exercise at a place called the Unforeseen Simulation Joint – the USJ. They called themselves the League of Villains, and were hell bent on killing All Might.

Not that Midoriya said a word, but it was clear to Shinso that he was beside himself with worry.

Before the disruptive afternoon came to a close, the students of class

1-A returned to the main campus. Their arrival wasn't hard to miss, and Midoriya waited agitatedly by the entrance to class 1-C for them to walk by.

"Hey, Midoriya!" Uraraka called out excitably as she and Iida arrived alongside the rest of their colourfully clothed classmates.

The expression on his face melted into visible relief as he saw how little cuts and bruises marred their faces.

"Is everyone ok?" Shinso questioned, voicing what he knew Midoriya would have said if it weren't for all the other students milling around him, heading off to retrieve their things or be checked out by Recovery Girl in the infirmary.

"Thanks to the teachers!" Uraraka answered. "And Iida! He was great – he managed to get out and ran all the way here to get help!"

"Whilst everyone else stayed and fought, of course," he reminded her.

"Hey, it could have gone a lot worse if it weren't for you!" she snapped, "Don't beat yourself down about it!"

Shinso didn't miss Midoriya's nervous fidgeting as some of the soon-to-be-heroes marched by. Another thing he acknowledged was the glare of an explosively dressed boy, who's red eyes met Midoriya's green ones for a split second. Shinso wondered what the story behind *that* was – if there was one at all and the guy didn't just emit an aura of *touch me and I kill you*. Both are equally likely to be true.

"Nice hero costumes," Shinso said, changing the subject.

"Why thank you!" Iida replied, doing his chopping the air thing again as he explained its various practicalities and features.

"I-It reminds me of I-Ingenium's costume!" Midoriya stammered.

"He's my elder brother!" Iida announced proudly.

Midoriya proceeded to gush over how cool he thought the hero was for the next three minutes. Shinso, meanwhile, was not as impressed. Typical, Iida had everything handed to him on a silver platter. He was born with the perfect Quirk and the perfect opportunity to reach for the stars. Shinso had to work for it – but he would; harder than any other – and he would prove them wrong.

“I should have been more specific with mine,” Uraraka laughed feebly. “It’s skin-tight! I would have preferred it to be a little loser – but I’m kind of getting used to it.”

“T-They’re both really good!” replied Midoriya.

“Hey! What are you two doing out there?!” It was Ohchi, who threw the door open dramatically. She blinked in surprise when she spotted the two hero students.

“We were talking,” Shinso replied coldly.

“Well, Present Mic should be back any minute – and he left me in charge!” she snapped. “Can’t you at least get in here and look like you’ve been doing *some* work?”

“Ah, yes!” Iida suddenly exclaimed, “We should probably return to our own class and check on what we should be doing next!”

“Lead the way, class rep!” Uraraka grinned. “See you guys soon!”

Midoriya waved weakly as Shinso dragged him back into the classroom as to not aggravate Ohchi more than necessary. Like most of general studies – she wasn’t fond of the hero course students, and perhaps wasn’t keen on that fact that they were conversing.

Fortunately, Present Mic returned only moments later, and began to explain that school would be ending a little early whilst the matter surrounding the USJ attack was dealt with.

“You’re welcome to hang about if your train doesn’t leave the station until the day’s officially up – but other than that, you’re officially… DISMISSED!” he announced overdramatically.

Nearly all of the class got up immediately, chattering amongst themselves in already tight-knit friendship groups as they left the room behind Present Mic. The only one who didn’t, in fact, was Midoriya.

“Can’t you get an earlier train?” Shinso questioned curiously as he noticed Midoriya made no effort to pack away his various things.

He shrugged and then signed, [*I’ve still got some work to finish, and I’ll concentrate better here than at home. I think I’ll wait until the day’s officially up*]

“I can wait with you if you want some company,” Shinso offered.

Midoriya shook his head frantically, [*It’s really fine! I’ll only be writing anyway. So, see you tomorrow?*]

It seemed rather dismissive, but again, if Midoriya didn’t want Shinso to know something, then Shinso would give it time, and leave him to it – hoping that one day, he’d trust him enough to explain. “Sure, see you tomorrow.”

After all, Shinso didn’t really want to stick around to deal with the press mobbing the school again after news of the USJ attack got out…

Midoriya felt awful about lying to Shinso, but he just wasn’t ready to tell him about his Quirk – not until he was sure what it actually *was*. Moreover, if he did tell him, he would have to *show* his Quirk to him – and that would require singing. He’d just barely gotten used to *talking!* Singing would take a little more time to get used to…

With all the chaos surrounding the USJ attack, most students headed home as quickly as they could, and few noticed Midoriya lagging behind.

He knew he told Mum that he would ask for permission to practise his Quirk at school so it could get registered… but… if he couldn’t even muster the courage to tell Shinso – how could he possibly tell a teacher?! That was why, only once he was sure everyone who knew him had gone, Midoriya mustered the courage to pack up his things and hurry out of class 1-C.

From the tour at the beginning of term, Midoriya knew vaguely where the different ‘gyms’ and halls were situated around UA. Eventually, he found himself at the door to the spacious hall where they had played dodgeball against class 1-D only a few days prior.

In the panic of leaving school early, someone had forgotten to lock the doors, and Midoriya let out a thankful sigh of relief as it swung open for him. Once inside, he shut the door behind him and flicked on the light switch, revealing a massive, empty space for him to work with.

He took off his blazer and tie, leaving them in a pile by his rucksack.

Then, after delving for some time, he managed to locate his little speaker, and plugged it into his phone. After it was set up, Midoriya finally pulled out a pen and his new notebook, which he had titled: *Quirk Analysis* – it was a title that was inconspicuous enough to be ignored by anyone who picked it up, thinking it was another one of his hero analysis notebooks, but different enough for Midoriya to distinguish. It wasn't just any Quirk analysis notebook – it was analysis on *his* Quirk.

"Ok, ok…" Midoriya mumbled, letting his thoughts tumble out into reality without fearing anyone could hear them. He picked up his notebook and began pacing around the hall, rereading his notes so they were fresh in his mind. "So, my Quirk activates whenever I sing a song… and it seems to give me a power whilst I'm singing that correlates with the meaning behind the song in question. And then I can't use that power again for a limited amount of time – probably… That would explain why singing 'Set Fire to the Rain' didn't work twice in a row. The power also seems to get stronger the longer I sing the song – for example, for my first song, at the beginning, the rain only grew hot, but then set alight when the music swelled for the second chorus – so, the strength of the power depends on how far through the song I am…" He paused, tapping his pen on his lip thoughtfully.

After a moment, he flipped through the notebook a little further, past the blank pages he'd left for further analysis, and reached his pages on possible songs and what abilities they could grant him. Sure, he was getting a little ahead of himself – there was still a looming possibility that all this was just a freak accident, and that he had no Quirk at all, but, for the first time in a while, Midoriya had allowed himself to be optimistic.

With these detrimental thoughts of it all being a big misunderstanding, Midoriya realised there was only one way to prove to himself that he really had a Quirk – sing a song that would grant him a power that would very clearly *not* be a fluke.

So, he jogged back over to his phone and speaker, left his notebook by his bag, and tapped on one of the songs he'd been considering all day long:

~Thunder – Imagine Dragons~

As the music started, he didn't feel that pressure in his chest as he began to sing – not a worry crossed his mind of being heard, so the words came with ease.

"*… I was dreaming, of bigger things and – wanna leave my old life behind…"*

The song carried on. It was familiar to Midoriya – he had heard it many times, over and over again. The sound of the drum seemed to find a rhythm with every other beat of his heart. It was so easy to sink into the music – to drift away from thoughts of villain attacks and anxiety. When he was alone with his music, everything was ok.

"*I was lightning – before the thunder!"*

A smile broke across his face – his feet moving in time to the rhythm. He twisted and he turned, not caring how messy and unchoreographed his dancing would have looked – he was enjoying himself; that was all that really mattered.

"*Thunder! Feel the thunder…"*

He could have sworn the whole building shook as he slammed his feet on the ground – the sound of thunder echoed around him.

And as the chorus ended…

"*…Lightning then the thunder!"*

With a crash and a flash of light, Midoriya screamed.

The lights flickered, swaying above him. When they returned to normality, panting, Midoriya gazed down at his feet. Right there, next to him, was a scorch mark far greater than those left peppered across his guitar – the mark left behind by a lightning bolt.

Midoriya stood there for a moment in shock, staring at the blacked floor. And then he laughed, running back over to his phone and switching off the music.

Oh yeah – he most *definitely* had a Quirk.

Jotting down the results of his first test in his notebook, Midoriya sat by his bag, unable to stifle the massive grin splitting across his face.

But what now?

He picked up his phone and scrolled down through what he had most recently played – when he stumbled across the song Uraraka had been listening to earlier that day. Unlike the other songs he had thought of testing – Midoriya wasn't too sure what this could bring. But… how could he ever know for sure until he tried it out for himself?

~Wings – Hurts~

There was something about this song – a certain understanding and belonging. It was like he could relate to it more than it most likely intended. It was likely about love – about two people finding safety and serenity in each other's company. But Midoriya didn't quite see it like that. He felt like it was about a guardian angel – someone who would lift you up from your darkest moments in life. That someone could be anyone, surely – his mother, his friends – even himself – a part of himself with the confidence to soar above the negativity of others and reach for the stars.

"*Say you'll catch me when I fall …"*

He almost forgot about his Quirk in that moment, deep in thought about the meaning behind the music. So, with a sense of surprise which was becoming routine alongside new powers at this point, the chorus arrived.

"*Wrap your wings around my body!"*

Midoriya wasn't dancing this time; just singing to the empty hall. Perhaps it was because he wasn't moving, that he was able to maintain his composure and keep singing when the power activated – and a pair of massive green wings wrapped themselves around him.

Struggling to keep in tune, Midoriya spun around on the spot, trying to figure out where the mass of feathers had come from. It was only when he managed to reach the small of his back with his fingertips, that he realised the wings were *his* – protruding from beneath his shoulder blades.

He tried not to laugh with a mixture of shock and gleefulness as it

dawned on him that yes, he had just grown wings.

"*When we stood on the skyline, there was no turning back – and you said not to stare at the ground…"*

He slowly let the wings unravel and droop behind him like a cape of feathers. He was still singing when he tested his new limbs, moving them about unsurely in a similar manner to how a new-born foal would wobble on its legs, still grinning like a fool.

When he realised the next chorus was about to begin, he hurried back to his bag, and spread his wings to their fullest extent, crouching like he was at the start of a one-hundred-meter dash.

"…*When I'm lost in the storm – and I'm calling…"*

When the familiar chorus began, he pushed himself forward, picking up as much speed as he could before flapping his great wingspan – and it wasn't long before his feet were no longer touching the ground.

"*Wrap your wings – wrap your wings! Wrap your wings around my body!"*

When he almost hit the wall on the opposite side of the hall, he turned clumsily in the air. Managing not to yell in fright, he somehow changed direction. Whilst being thankful for the hall's ridiculously high ceiling, Midoriya whooped in joy when the song allowed him to do so.

Before long he was summersaulting – twisting and turning with ease. After his initial struggle, flying came so effortlessly to him. It was instinct, as natural as it would be for a fledgling bird, given time. Midoriya didn't know if it was his own body or if it was part of his Quirk that allowed this to be true, but he didn't really care at this point.

"*We're flying above the valley below…"*

In his euphoria, with the wind blowing in his hair and through his feathers, he felt lost to the world. For here, alone in the hall at UA, Midoriya finally had a reason to fly.

However, he wasn't quite as alone as he thought he was…

Chapter End Notes

The songs used in this chapter were:

Thunder - Imagine Dragons - original
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4AqjqOqNrjw

Wings - Hurts - original
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PP4y92c0xV4
If that link doesn't work, try: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PedE5IZ7DfE

Oh and by the way, I've noticed a few of you comment about links and whatnot, and would just like to remind you that you don't need to come all the way to these end notes to find the songs! Whenever they're mentioned in the story (in the special font and in the middle of the page, like, Thunder - Imagine Dragons) - just click on the words and it'll take you straight to the song! In some cases, the link is specialised so the song starts at a specific point (a tip I picked up from a nice reader I can't remember the name of :)). So, yeah! Just a reads up :)
Thank you for reading! :) :) :)

More Than What Meets the Eye

Chapter Notes

MANGA READERS AT THE MOMENT:

Aw this is sad but cute - look at the corgi that's adorable

Wait, corgi, no.
No.
NOOOOOOOOOOOOO

XD Sorry

On another note I HAVE ANOTHER THEORY GUYS

What if Shigaraki has Marie-Antoinette Syndrome? OOoooohhhh

Ok, I need to stop doing this now - actually, you know, I'm just going to give you guys a headcanon/theory at the start of every chapter. I'm bound to run out eventually but let's just roll with it for now.

ANYwAYs BACK TO CANARY

Present Mic wouldn't be ashamed to admit that he was glad he didn't have to go on patrol that evening, nor did he have to attend to his radio show, because yes, Aizawa was wrong – he *did* have back up plans for when his hero life took priority over his various other jobs – and with that, came back up radio hosts. It was almost a shame it hadn't been a Friday – he only played non-stop music on Fridays, so there was really no need in him being there at the radio station. But it was a Wednesday, so never mind.

That day sure had been eventful, and the following few days were bound to not be much sanctuary. They'd only *just* gotten rid of the press – and now they'll be back at it again! It was like the media were

flies, and their fly spray wasn't as effective as the packet said it was.

This was one of the reasons he chose to stay behind at UA's main campus after school was ended early. The longer he could postpone leaving and having to run into the hoards of reporters, the better. Another reason was so that he could have something to do whilst he waited for the hospital to give him the all clear to check up on his friend Aizawa. It had been rather destressing seeing his old school friend so blooded and bruised like that…

Anyway, *someone* had to sweep the school to make sure everyone had gone home before the police could start their investigations. There were only a few third years lagging behind anyway – taking advantage of the chaos to spend some extra time with the school's resources before the day was up. This mainly involved the support classes – but no change there, they'd always been difficult to get away from their work benches.

So, when Yamada wandered up to Principal Nedzu's office, he was pretty convinced the school was empty, and was pleased to report so.

"Good evening, Present Mic!" Nedzu chimed happily as Yamada entered the office.

"Hey, Principal Nedzu!" he replied with equal enthusiasm. "Just to give you a heads up – the school seems clear from top to bottom if you want to let the police do whatever they need to do!"

"Ah, yes – did you check the *entire* school?"

Yamada hesitated, "Did I miss someone?" he guessed. He'd checked everywhere he could have thought of where a student might have been...

"One of your first years, it would appear," Nedzu informed him.

He frowned, "…Who?"

"Izuku Midoriya."

Ok, that was a little off, "Sign language kid?"

The Principal waved him over to his desk, where his beady eyes were transfixed on his computer screen. Present Mic jogged over in upmost curiosity. But, when his own eyes rested on what Principal Nedzu was watching, his glasses almost fell off in shock.

“He has *wings!”* Yamada gaped, “I thought he was Quirkless – how in the –”

“Look closer,” the Principal insisted.

Yamada did, but he wasn’t too sure what the Principal was implying.

“He is unsure and unsteady,” he explained when no revelation was made on Yamada’s part. “Not used to this power. This is why I have reason to believe that the boy has only just realised he has a Quirk at all.”

“That’s impossible,” Yamada insisted. “You get a Quirk at like, four, and that’s it!”

“Midoriya’s Quirk appears to be rather peculiar,” Nedzu continued. “He summoned a lightning bolt earlier.”

“He did *WHAT?!”*

“Did you not hear it? I did – that is why I decided to check the security feed. Why don’t you go and speak with him?” Nedzu instructed in a polite manner that made it sound like it was only a request; one which Yamada didn’t necessarily have to fulfil, but he knew better. “You are his homeroom teacher, after all – and you are one of the only members of staff who can confidently communicate with sign language. However, it is a shame these security cameras don’t have a sound system. Look at his mouth – it’s moving. Therefore, he is either talking to himself, or perhaps he is singing.”

“But he’s *mute!”*

“And Quirkless,” Nedzu smiled in an unintentionally menacing way. “But you can’t know for sure, until you see for yourself. For example, how could one know that Japan is an island if they have never seen the ocean? How could they know the sea exists at all, or the rest of the world, for that matter? My point is, you can either trust in the evidence laid before you by another or set out to retrieve that evidence yourself. I believe that the latter is the better option in this situation. Not only for us, but for Midoriya too – who has just realised he has a phenomenal power, after spending his entire life facing a horrid prejudice for not having one at all.”

Present Mic, meanwhile, was still staring, dumfounded, at one of his youngest, most feeble students, doing backflips in the air like he’d been flying his entire life. He just nodded senselessly at Nedzu’s

lecture. Once he was sure it was finished, he darted out of the room as fast as he possibly could, and sprinted all the way to the hall where Midoriya had hidden himself away in.

Panting, he hesitated by the entrance, hand hovering over the doorknob. He could hear the faint echo of music from within. He thought Nedzu was kidding when he suggested Midoriya could have been *singing*.

~Wings – Hurts~

"*We're flying above the valley below…"*

Present Mic opened the door as slowly and quietly as he could. His mouth hung open as he closed it behind him, not daring to take his eyes away from the student that he thought he'd be protecting from everyone and everything for the next three years – not in a million years, did he think he'd be facing something like *this* – and he'd just come back from a villain attack at the USJ (not universal studios Japan – but the two were easy enough to confuse).

The music swelled as Midoriya repeated those lyrics. They were the very first words Present Mic had ever heard him utter.

Here he was, soaring high above him in a hall for hero students, without a care in the world. He dipped and dived, twisting and turning with apparent ease – having the time of his life.

"Wrap your wings around my body!" the boy whooped with glee.

How he hadn't noticed Yamada yet was beyond him. Perhaps he was so enthralled with his seemingly newfound ability that his mind simply blocked Yamada out of his peripheral vision.

"*Wrap your wings – wrap your wings – wrap your wings around…"*

That was when he finally caught his eye.

The music that reverberated from the little speaker at Present Mic's feet continued, but Midoriya's mouth stopped moving immediately, eyes wide with surprise and fear.

Yamada faltered, before reaching down and pressing pause on Midoriya's phone, letting silence fill the hall once more.

Midoriya just hovered there for a moment, before a sudden realisation seemed to wash over him and he frantically begun his descent. He fell to the ground with a thud – his wings disappearing in a burst of green feathers not far off the floor.

Rushing towards him, Yamada fell to his knees by Midoriya's side. The boy breathed heavily and frantically, sitting right in the middle of a large, sprawling scorch mark in the middle of the hall.

"Hey there, little listener," Yamada said softly to him. He had his knees tucked up to his chest, eyes darting around in panic, as if looking for anyone else who might have heard him. "It's alright – take deep breathes for me, ok? Like this, breathe in, and… breathe *out* – ok – and again, breathe in… and out."

It took longer than Yamada would have liked for Midoriya to calm down even a little bit. Eventually, he opened his mouth to say something, but all that came out was a strangled squeak. Midoriya grasped his throat like something was strangling him as he desperately tried to force the words out.

"Hey, look at me," Present Mic insisted.

Midoriya looked up hesitantly, eyes brimming with tears.

[*You're not in trouble, don't worry – and you don't have to speak to me if you don't want to*] he signed, not speaking so the kid wouldn't feel like he had to do the same.

His shoulders relaxed a little; his hand leaving his throat. He closed his mouth and gave Yamada a feeble nod.

[*That was pretty awesome*] Yamada added eagerly.

Midoriya seemed rather surprised by that. He blinked back the tears, his mouth slightly agape.

[*So, you have a Quirk after all?*]

He tensed up again. Wow, it was kind of hard to read his body language and react accordingly.

[*I'm not telling you off*] insisted Yamada. [*Is this a new thing? You looked*

pretty confident with the whole flying around the place ordeal]

[*New*] Midoriya signed simply.

[*So, you can sprout wings whenever you want? That sounds like an incredible Quirk!*]

Midoriya shook his head.

Right, Principal Nedzu had mentioned a lightning bolt. Yamada glanced down at the scorch mark. How did that work?

[*I-I'm so sorry!*] Midoriya signed quickly in a jittery manner as he followed Yamada's gaze. [*I didn't think – but I had no where else safe to practise – it was silly of me, I know – I promise I won't do it again – damage school property or use my Quirk or* –]

"Hey! No need to panic!" Present Mic exclaimed. The sudden sound startled the kid a little. "[You're in a hero school – students damage stuff all the time, and this is just a scorch mark. Seriously, you've got nothing to worry about]" he spoke and signed at the same time.

[*I still shouldn't have used the lightning bolt*] Midoriya insisted, [*I was just so excited and I'd been wondering about it all day. I'm sorry…*]

"If you didn't use the lightning bolt then I wouldn't have realised you were here," said Yamada, deciding to leave Principal Nedzu and his hidden cameras out of the conversation for the time being. "And I think being here's a good thing! Because now I get to see your Quirk – and it's really confusing me!"

Midoriya laughed – it was little, very quiet – but it was something. [*It's confusing me too. That's why I'm here*]

"Do you know what it is?" Yamada questioned.

Midoriya wavered, holding his hands up as he thought through his response, [*Singing*]

"Singing?" Yamada repeated after a moment. "How…?"

He didn't meet Yamada's eyes as he continued to sign, [*Each song gives me a different power*]

Present Mic thought back to the song he had just heard him singing. It had been about wings… and the boy consequently *had wings*. "That – is *awesome!"*

He didn't even flinch at the raised volume that time, [*You really think so?*]

"Hell yeah! Just think of the possibilities!"

[*W-Well there are downsides too… I only get the powers whilst I'm singing and for a few m-moments after I stop. and s-sometimes the Quirk only kicks in quite late into the song – usually in the chorus, and then gets stronger after that. And then I can't use the same song again for a while… B-But I haven't had much time to p-practise. I don't know what other l-limitations there are*] he explained, his movements jerky and a little difficult to understand – but Yamada didn't mind.

"Of course, there are limitations!" Yamada laughed, leaping to his feet. "All Quirks have their own little problems! But with a power like that? Kid, you could become a *hero*."

Midoriya jerked his head suddenly at the words, staring up at Present Mic with wide eyes, "You think I can be a hero?"

A smile broke out over Yamada's face. He had met quite a few selectively mute kids in his past. They usually took a *lot* longer to trust him enough to speak. He wondered if this was Shinso's doing. He and Midoriya had grown rather close over the short time in which they'd known each other. Perhaps a friend like that was what Midoriya needed to help him get out of his shell. Although, maybe that wasn't the only reason why he spoke.

"YEAH!" Present Mic yelled, holding out his hand and pulling Midoriya to his feet. "And it's not just the Quirk either! I mean, you're smart – 91% in that entrance exam was no easy feat! And hey! Just *look* at what you did in dodgeball the other day! Not only were you super cool helping out all your other classmates with their Quirks but remember that flip?! Holy shoot – *no one* in the staff room believed me when I said you could do *that!* Who'd have thought you were so… athletic!"

There were tears rolling down Midoriya's face, his bottom lip shaking, "I-It's from d-dance class," he explained shakily.

"You *DANCE?!* How can you get any more *AWESOME?!"*

Now he was laughing and crying at the same time, trying to rub the tears away, but to no prevail.

"No, no – wait, let me guess – you play an instrument don't you?

Because if you don't that's the next step up – wait, was that a nod? That was a nod! You *play?!* What do you play?! You know what, tell me later when your eyes have stopped leaking – sound like a plan?"

That was when Midoriya threw himself at Yamada, in a very tearful, shaking embrace.

"Careful of the shoulder spikes!" Yamada warned Midoriya as he hugged him back.

They stood like that for a while, as Present Mic waited patiently for Midoriya's tears to run out. They did calm down a little – but Yamada started to suspect his supply was never-ending.

"Did you ever want to be a hero, little listener?" Present Mic frowned as he pondered Midoriya's dramatic response to such simple words.

Midoriya pulled away and nodded tentatively.

"Well…" he started, thinking hard about what to do next. "The Sports Festival is coming up – if they're still going through with it after the USJ attack thing. I think they will; Principal Nedzu thought it would be a good way of showing the world that we at UA are standing tall! Anyway, if someone from general studies shows enough promise, we can consider transferring them to the hero course later in the year!"

Midoriya rubbed away the last of his tears. His face lit up for a moment, before he turned away and fiddled nervously with his fingernails. "But… t-then I'd have to use my Quirk in front of everybody…"

"Well, yeah – you'd need to if you want to be a hero, but why – *oh*… is it because of the singing?"

He nodded.

Present Mic pouted; his arms crossed. That sure was a tricky one. How could the mute kid with a voice Quirk possibly learn how to use it?

"Well, from what I've heard so far, your singing is about as awesome as everything else you seem to do," he proclaimed.

Midoriya gave him a weak smile, [*Thank you*]

"All you need is a little more confidence!" Yamada concluded. But in such short notice? The kid barely knew what his Quirk was capable of

– let alone his voice and anxiety issues…

It all started with a bit of a lightbulb moment.

"Ever listened to my radio show, Midoriya?"

Another nod.

"Well, then you'd know I've always had a bit of a problem with my Thursday shows, yeah?"

"Um, yes?"

"Everything else is all thought out – guests in on certain days, music on Fridays – you know. Every day has its specific schedule – *except* Thursdays."

"Which… changes every week," Midoriya finished.

"*Exactly!"* Present Mic said with a click of his fingers. "So, you have problems when talking to most people face to face, yeah – well what about over the radio?"

Midoriya's eyes widened. "Y-You – what?!"

"Tomorrow's Thursday!" he continued to explain. "If you come with me after school – I could take you to the radio station and you could be a guest! How does *that* sound?!"

"T-Terrifying…" he gaped.

Present Mic laughed, "But it would improve your confidence!"

"T-That sounds r-really great! B-But I… I just don't think I can do it… So many people listen to your radio show…"

"No one would need to know who you are," he offered. "You hardly speak to anyone – so they won't recognise you."

He started kicking at the scorch mark beneath his feet, avoiding Yamada's gaze again.

"Look, Midoriya," he sighed, crouching down to look up at him.

“You’re a great kid – with an incredible mind and an incredible power! I want to help you – you can be a hero! All you need to do, is make this one, brave step – and you’re on your way. And if you really can’t do it – then you can back out! There’s no pressure!”

He looked into his eyes again, before reaching up behind him to rub the place where his wings had been. There was no hole in his shirt – it was such an amazing ability. He could do so much good with it. All he needed to do, was say –

“Ok.”

Present Mic blinked, “O-Ok? You’ll give it a go?!”

Midoriya clenched his hands into fists, took a deep breath and nodded surely.

“*YYYEEEAAAHHH!”* his teacher cried, leaping up excitably. “Good on you, Songbird!”

“S-Songbird?”

“Well, you need a codename, fledgling hero! Got a different one?!”

Midoriya hesitated.

That was when he thought back to something Shinso had said not long ago:

[*You don’t have to pressurise yourself to speak. I can keep translating for you at school if you want – and Cockatoo can too*]

[*Cockatoo?*]

“Present Mic, obviously.”

And then his mind drifted to that passage about little birds singing in the depths of coal mines so long ago. Little heroes that kept singing

until the very end.

“Y-You’ll be Cockatoo,” Midoriya stated timidly.

Present Mic howled with laughter, “Is because of the hair?! That’s brilliant! I love it – but what about you?!”

"I-I...I'll be...

“...Canary.”

Where it All Began

Chapter Notes

Someone mocked my Shigaraki hair theory WELL THEN HERE'S ANOTHER HAIR THEORY

Right so, everyone knows about the Touya Todoroki is Dabi theory - then in the manga Touya has white hair and it was changed to red for the anime (because the character is going to be important in some way or another, whether he's Dabi or not) but Dabi has black hair. Nearly, no ALL, fics I've read with Dabi in them as Touya say he dyes his hair, well, does Dabi look like the kind of guy who has the patience or money to fill in his roots? No. I doubt he even showers - that's gotta hurt with all those wounds - and that is exactly my point! His hair is red, but it's COVERED IN SOOT. Now I've gotten soot on my hair before, and let me tell you it REFUSES to come off until you've showered at least twice (there was a lot of soot ok?). But now I can hear the Midoriyas of you out there saying:
But CLOUD Dabi's Quirk is BLUE FIRE which is complete combustion and therefore he produces not carbon particulates and thus NO SOOT.
WELL - he has to turn his Quirk off somehow - supressing it down until it DOES produce soot before it turns off.

(also that most recent manga chapter though - wwwwwwwwwhhhhhhhhhhhaaaaaaaaaaatttttttt???)

ANYWAYS back to Canary:

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey, Mum?”

Inko looked up in surprise. Izuku rarely spoke during meals. There had been a time where it was hard for her to get him to eat at all.

“Yes, Izuku?” she replied tentatively.

“Um… So, I did what you said to do yesterday,” he continued, not

looking up from his food.

“W-What was that, Honey?”

“To, um, practise my Quirk at school.” He was jabbing at the rice with his chopsticks now; clearly nervous about talking to her about this.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, “You talked to a teacher?!”

“I, um, well I – I didn’t *want* to talk to anyone… It just sort of… happened?”

“Right…?” Inko pushed encouragingly, a smile spreading across her face.

“It was my homeroom teacher – Present Mic.”

“The man on the radio?!” Inko remembered, “Oh, yes, I remember you telling me – he knows JSL, doesn’t he?”

“Err, yeah,” he was stirring it absentmindedly now. “He said my Quirk was really cool.”

“See? The teachers at UA aren’t like the ones at your old school!” Inko said triumphantly, “Are you going to eat anymore, Izuku?”

He shook his head and pushed the bowl towards her as she began to tidy away the various cups and bowls strewn across the table.

“A-And, Mum – well, he said that if I did well in the Sports Festival with it – I could make it into the hero course!”

Inko’s hands froze over the tap, turning back to her son. She saw the shaky smile on his face and before long, her expression matched. “R-Really, Izuku?! Oh, that’s so wonderful– and singing? Are you sure the Quirk was about singing?”

He nodded surely. “I-I figured out how to grow wings and everything!”

“W-Wings?!”

“Yeah! But… if I-I want to get to the hero course, I need to sing in the Sports Festival – in front of all those people…”

Inko stirred the water in the washing-up-bowl thoughtfully. “Well, you could always take singing lessons?”

“No, Mum, I… Actually, Present Mic had a different idea.”

“Uh huh?”

“Well, he said that all I needed was a little practise and confidence…”

“Yes, but wouldn’t that be exactly what singing lessons supply?” Inko frowned. She wasn’t looking at her son now as she scrubbed the bowls diligently. Izuku got up from his chair and hurried over to her side, drying whatever items she had finished with.

“Maybe… but not like this,” he explained vaguely.

“Well? Are you going to keep me in the dark or tell me what he’s suggested?” she laughed, handing the chopsticks to Izuku.

“Err… He might have suggested that I go on his radio show with him…”

Inko froze, “O-On his *radio show?!”*

“Today? At about six thirty? I was going to tell you about it last night, but then you got that email saying school would be closed today because of that villain attack, and, well, I kind of forgot.” He didn’t look her in the eye, furiously wiping off the remaining suds.

“D-Did you say yes?!”

He tensed up, “Um…”

“Izuku, you have to say yes!” she insisted, grasping his shoulders with soapy hands. “This is an incredible opportunity! Even if you don’t make it onto the hero course, you could end up finding a little job at the radio station! It’s linked to his hero agency you know – oh, Izuku – please don’t tell me you said no!”

“I-I… I said yes!”

Inko teared up, pulling him into a hug. “I’m really proud of you.”

“T-Thanks, Mum,” he sobbed. “B-But I don’t know if I-I can do it!”

She pulled away, reaching up to cup her son’s face in her hands fondly. “I-It’s a radio show! You’re not talking to anyone but Present Mic face to face. Hardly anyone’s had the privilege of hearing your voice before, so they won’t know it’s you unless you say your name.”

“I-I’m not saying my n-name. I’m going to use a c-codename like the heroes d-do.”

“What is it?”

“C-Canary?”

“Like a songbird,” she concluded with a wide smile. “When you walk into that radio studio – you aren’t Izuku anymore, ok? You’re Canary! And Canary can be whoever you want him to be – you can be brave and kind and confident! Everything you are and more; everything you *know* you can be.”

He faltered for a moment, before nodding with a bright smile.

“I’ll be listening for sure. So, if you ever feel nervous, just think about me, listening in – and that no one else can hear you.”

Midoriya would be lying if he said he didn’t already know where Present Mic’s hero agency was. He knew about a lot of the hero agencies around Musutafu, and because of how much he enjoyed the radio show, Present Mic’s wasn’t an exception.

The news was rife with talk on the USJ attack that had occurred the day before. It was all anyone was thinking about. Midoriya, however, was a different story. As he stepped off the train and hurried along the streets, his eyes filtered past the billboards covered in information about arrested villains and class 1-A, as he scanned the buildings for the tell-tale sign of the hero agency he was looking for. It didn’t take long for him to find it. Before he knew it, Midoriya was standing on the doorstep, quite literally shaking in his boots.

He must have been there for a while, because the tinted glass doors suddenly opened to reveal a blue skinned lady, wearing a pair of headphones over messy, indigo hair. She narrowed her eyes at him momentarily, before asking, “It’s Izuku Midoriya, right?”

Midoriya nodded frantically.

The blue lady broke out into a wide smile, flashing a set of rather sharp, pearly white teeth. “Well, hey there, Canary! Don’t be shy,

come on in!"

She help the door open for him and Midoriya stepped hesitantly inside.

"Present Mic *said* you'd be a bit of a nervous wreck – not in those words exactly, of course – but that's what you look like – a nervous wreck. Reminds me of my first day here – *terrifying*," she laughed. "I'm Aozora, by the way. Not a pro hero, nor sidekick, but I do my bit!"

Midoriya's eyes darted around his new surroundings as Aozora led him straight to the elevator. There wasn't much to see first off – just a brightly coloured reception area where several employees chatted happily amongst themselves. They saw Aozora and gave her a wave. Their gaze drifted over to Midoriya – one gave him finger guns and proceeded to type something on his computer. Aozora pushed him into the elevator before he could even wave back.

"*So*," Aozora began, tilting her head towards Midoriya and giving him that frightening grin once more, "Present Mic said you had a *singing* Quirk. That's majorly cool." She pressed the floor number as the doors of the elevator closed. "We've got quite a few voice Quirk heroes around here – that and like, listening heroes and stuff. I don't know, I don't really pay attention." She laughed, "You see, I help manage the radio aspect of this place now. We cross over with the hero side quite a lot, but that doesn't mean I know *everyone's* Quirks inside and out."

Midoriya gulped nervously as the lift began to rise up through the building. He caught his reflection in the mirrored walls of the elevator. Aozora was right – he *did* look like a nervous wreck.

"You listen to our radio, kid?"

Midoriya nodded anxiously.

"Good answer – 'cause if you do well you might be here for a *while*. Not like, stuck in the building or anything, but you'll probably be hanging around, you know? Quite a few of us here started out like you – with no idea what we're doing and just going with the flow. But, hey, the flow worked out, am I right?"

With a soft *ding*, the elevator doors opened again. Aozora waltzed out confidently, with Midoriya scurrying along behind her.

"Here, look."

Midoriya ground to a halt beside Aozora. She was pointing through a window at a room filled with rows of computers; most of which had workers sitting behind them, frowning at their screens or talking to someone through their headsets.

“So, if you *do* listen to the radio, then you’ll know about our emergency number, right?” Aozora questioned.

Midoriya gave her another nod.

“We’re like a hero version of 119. Not that you wouldn’t be able to get a hero if you called the emergency services, but our version if purely for our agency! We deal with a lot of domestic violence stuff – kids with mental health problems – crimes or dangerous situations that are a little more out of the public eye. It’s not so flashy, but still super important. It’s also kind of perfect for the types of Quirks our heroes have – maybe not so much Present Mic – he’s a little loud, but like, other people who can defuse situations or sneak into places unseen.”

Midoriya gazed curiously into the room. He remembered hearing Present Mic extatically announce the telephone number over the air sometimes, saying if you ever need a hero, to just call up – and they’d be there.

“I worked in there for a while, and trust me when I say you feel like a real hero – not the kind of guy who wears a fancy costume and whose got an amazing power like yours – but someone who can make a difference, you get what I mean? But it’s tough work; really distressing when things don’t turn out ok. You’ve gotta feel for those guys,” she said, nodding towards her colleagues. “But they do a good job.”

Aozora didn’t let Midoriya stand there for much longer. She grabbed his wrist and pulled him back down the corridor as she continued to speak, filling in the gaps so Midoriya didn’t have to.

“We’ve got the mainstream heroes too, like Present Mic – who go on patrols and protect the neighbourhood from the kind of villains you see in the media. Then we’ve got the heroes who stay in the background and go to the places they’re called to by the, well, we call it the ‘White-Noise Team’, those guys back there head the operation, and then more underground type heroes deal with the situation, get it?”

Midoriya nodded. He was doing a lot of that, but Aozora wasn’t giving him much time to breathe.

Before long, they were back in the elevator and heading up higher into the building. “Sorry, I just thought you’d want to see that. I love a good tour; we don’t give enough of them. Oh! We’re almost out of time, whoops. We’ll go straight to the studio then.”

As soon as the doors opened once more, Aozora steered Midoriya into a rather large room, that seemed to be designed to be as comfortable as possible. The floor was carpeted; sofas were dotted about everywhere; there was a TV hanging on the wall, although it was permanently muted. There were various computers dotted around the place, beside far too many scary looking monitors with blinking lights. At the far end, was a long window, obscured by a set of beige blinds. A man sat in a chair in front of them, his headphones on, fiddling with various buttons and switches on a complicated looking panel before him.

“Hey, Nakano!” Aozora called out.

The man did a double take before taking off his headphones and turning around in his chair, “Ah, is that Canary?”

Midoriya waved feebly.

Nakano laughed, “Yamada said you’d be a little nervous. I know it’s easier said than done but try not to worry about it all. Present Mic will be out in a moment – he’ll put a song on and then we’ll be on our way.” With that, he turned back around and put his headphones on once more.

“Come, sit down with me,” Aozora insisted, dragging Midoriya over to a random sofa. She sighed as she took the weight off her feet. “*God* today’s been long. You hear about the villain attack at UA? Oh, of course you have, you go there! Anyway, I *was* going to take you around the news floor, but it’s for the best that we didn’t, come to think of it. Everyone’s in an *absolute* frenzy over it! But, you see, Present Mic won’t give us any intel on it, for obvious reasons – not that we’re pushing him or anything; there’s no need, really. But anyway, we’ve got what we needed from other sources but there’s still plenty of…”

Midoriya zoned out pretty quickly. It wasn’t as though he wasn’t interested, but his mind was elsewhere. First of all, *oh my God* – Present Mic had been talking about him to his radio friends, which was a terrifying thought. Then, and rather more urgently – *he was about to go on the radio for the very first time*.

“YYYEEEAAAHHH THERE HE IS!”

Midoriya nearly jumped out of his skin as Present Mic’s familiar voice cut through the air. He stood up and turned around but…

He was out of his hero costume – and this, for some reason, was *not* what Midoriya had expected him to look like. He wore rather ordinary, wire-rimmed glasses, unlike the bright yellow shades he usually sported. His hair was long *really* long. That much was obvious from the way it was spiked up in his hero costume, but without all the hair gel, it would have hung loosely around his shoulders, if he hadn’t tied it up in a bun. The only part of his hero costume he still wore was his leather jacket, which was no longer done up, showing a simple white shirt underneath. Midoriya didn’t know why the look surprised him so much – did he seriously expect he looked like *Present Mic* all the time?

“HA!” yelled Aozora, “I *told* you he’d be shocked when you weren’t in your hero costume!”

Midoriya blushed furiously and stared at his shoes in panic.

“Don’t frighten him anymore than necessary, Aozora,” insisted Nakano in a monotone voice as he glanced at the various flashing lights of the monitors built into the wall.

Present Mic grasped Midoriya by his shoulders and, in a similar fashion to Aozora, stirred him into the studio, behind the door beside Nakano.

“Welcome to the studio!” he announced, closing the door behind him.

The studio looked very much like an extension to the room Midoriya had just left, which he assumed was some kind of waiting room. There was a table in the middle, with four chairs organised around it. Present Mic sat down in his, tapping the microphone that hung by his head and picking up the wireless headset.

“Pick a chair, any chair!” he explained, indicating to the two remaining spaces. Midoriya took the one diagonal to him, closest to the door (which was a coincidence, and not a position he chose so he could escape at a moment’s notice – that was only an added bonus), rather than the seat beside him, which was covered in various piles of paperwork and scripts, or the one opposite him, which was kind of behind his computer monitor.

Midoriya had his own monitor, not that he understood anything on it. He decided it was best to be left along, evident by the fact that the only main control panel, sharing some similarities to Nakano's, was out of his reach.

"How are you feeling, little listener?" asked the hero, in a much calmer voice than usual.

"A-A little nervous…" Midoriya admitted, repeating what both Nakano and Aozora had said. He was actually rather surprised the words came out at all.

"That's ok!" Present Mic replied, "And expected! *Everyone's* nervous on their first time on the radio! I've had a lot of other visitors in before – even pro heroes freak out from time to time!"

"T-They do?"

"YEAH! Some heroes are more used to being filmed from afar; they can feel a little trapped in the studio – can you *believe* it?!"

Yes, he very much could.

"*Anyway* – I've got a song on at the moment; I made sure it was quite a long one, don't worry! Look at your computer screen – see the word *live* in the top right-hand corner?"

Midoriya nodded, briefly distracted by the various notifications popping up all over the place.

"Ok, I've got the master controls over here. In a minute or so, the word *live* is going to glow bright red! That's how you know that your mic is on."

He was just continuously nodding now, bobbing his head up and down as his brain went into overdrive.

"If you put your headphones on – not yet – you'll hear the music playing over the radio," Present Mic continued. "We're going to be here for about an hour, but don't worry, I've got some *really* long songs queued up for you this time around!" he laughed. "When we go on the air, I'm going to introduce you and we'll just talk about stuff! Like having a normal conversation – that's all!"

'*Except thousands of people are also listening in at the same time – no biggie,"* thought Midoriya as he fiddled with his headphones in the

stress of it all.

“What are you happy with me saying, kid?” questioned the hero.

“U-Um, what do you mean?” Midoriya stammered.

“Like, can I briefly describe your Quirk? Say that you go to UA?”

He nodded hesitantly. “I-I’m sure you know b-best…”

Present Mic gave him a rather pitiful smile. His eyes flicked towards his monitor for a moment, probably checking how much longer he had left, before turning back to Midoriya. “What are you thinking of, right now – cast your thoughts of the radio aside – what else is buzzing around in that big brain of yours?”

“I-I-I,” he stuttered, unsure where his teacher was going with this, “um… well…” Midoriya glanced at the closed blinds; he knew Aozora and Nakano were behind them. “W-What’s Aozora’s Quirk?”

Present Mic’s grin grew wider, “You know, she’s never told me.”

“She hasn’t?”

“Nope! I guess I could look it up – but where’s the fun in that, huh?! What do *you* think it is?”

“W-Well, she’s got blue skin a-and sharp teeth… Is there some other element that’s a little more hidden? O-Or sometimes mutational effects are as a result of underlying features…”

He carried on like this for a while, spouting out numerous possibilities for Aozora’s Quirk as Present Mic listened on in astonishment. He couldn’t go on forever though (well, actually, that was up for debate), mainly because the song Present Mic was playing on the radio soon came to an end.

“– Headphones on, little listener!” he suddenly interrupted.

Blinking, Midoriya was pulled from his thoughts. He hesitated, staring at the headphones, before gingerly pulling them over his head. They were rather comfortable – his own ones tended to hurt after a while, but with these he could see himself blocking the entire world out for the rest of the year – if they weren’t connected to the radio, that was.

He could hear the song ending – the headphones supplying clear audio quality. He let himself focus on that rather than the whole… radio

thing, for a moment.

That was when that little *live* button glowed red – and the hour he'd look back on many, *many* times in the years to come, began.

Put Your Hands Up Radio

Thursday 18:30

Present Mic's Radio Show!

PRESENT MIC: *And* the song is OVER! Wow, you know, that is way longer than I thought it was! It's one of those songs where, about halfway through, you *think* it's ending, but then – SURPRISE! It's not! ANYWAY, it's Thursday! And you know what that means… I HAVE NOTHING PLANNED! Thursdays are just one of those days, you catch my drift? You're *tired* from the week behind you and it's *still* not over! LIKE THE SONG I JUST PLAYED – see what I did there? *But*, this week SPECIFICALLY has been *awfully* tiring – isn't that right, co-host?! Can I get a *YYYEEEAAAHHH!*

CO-HOST: U-Uh – y-yay?

Momentary silence followed by a splutter of laughter

PRESENT MIC: That's got to be the most *feeble* YEAH I've *ever heard!*

CO-HOST: S-Sorry…

PRESENT MIC: AS MOST OF YOU KNOW – I am an *English teacher* at the well-known hero school of UA! And *boy* has this week been *long!* My little co-host here is one of my many students! He may not be on the hero course, *but* that doesn't mean his week's been easy going!

CO-HOST: T-There was, err, yeah – a l-lot of press outside the front g-gate.

PRESENT MIC: INDEED, THERE WAS! Then we thought we got rid of them but that *horrible* incident involving hero class 1-A was the catalyst for a whole different kind of trouble! *SO*, after school yesterday I go around the place checking that everyone's gone home, and who do I stumble across? Why, it's my co-host here! And he's *singing* – his got an incredible voice – he's blushing now – don't give me that look! I feel bad!
OK! So, we talked – and he was mean to me – and I discovered – *let me finish!* I discovered he has this amazing Quirk! I've never heard of

anything like this before! And I'm not going to say much about it, because he's gone so red that I think he might explode – all I'll say is it's to do with his singing and it's *awesome!*
Alright, I'm done – you don't need to raise your hand, this isn't a classroom!

CO-HOST: I-I – *what?* I wasn't mean to you! I-I didn't *mean* to be… mean.

PRESENT MIC: That was many means right there. ANYHOW – what you said was *brilliant*. Long story short, I am Cockatoo now.

CO-HOST: W-Was that mean?

PRESENT MIC: I can *feel* my co-producer *cackling* as we speak.

CO-HOST: I-I –

PRESENT MIC: IT'S THE HAIR! I don't know how I never *noticed* it before – but *this* little songbird right here, is awfully observant; it can be a little scary at times. Anyway, I've just realised all our listeners are going to be *very* confused because they still don't really know who you are! So, since I'm Cockatoo – *this*, is Canary! Say hi!

CANARY: Um, hi?

PRESENT MIC: *You are very quiet*

CANARY: W-Well, maybe you're just v-very loud.

PRESENT MIC: I DON'T THINK THAT'S A MAYBE!

CANARY: Um, so, I balance you out?

PRESENT MIC: …Yeah, that's a good point. Canaries are usually quite noisy though!

CANARY: Cockatoos are louder.

PRESENT MIC: Are they? Trust you to know that – have you conducted a study on what bird is the loudest?!

CANARY: Um… no…?

PRESENT MIC: You know though, don't you?

CANARY: …Maybe.

PRESENT MIC: Then ENLIGHTEN US!

CANARY: I-It's the Kakapo – a type of parrot…

PRESENT MIC: But *why* – why waste space in that big brain of yours for information on what birds are the loudest?!

CANARY: …B-Because I wanted to know? The Kakapo can reach around 130 decibels in its mating call, and then I think… a type of bellbird reaches 100? But the sound of a jet engine can be 140 decibels.

PRESENT MIC: YOU LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERYDAY! But *why research birds?*

CANARY: …Honestly?

PRESENT MIC: It's because you wondered how loud I could be before I burst someone's eardrums, wasn't it?

CANARY: Possibly…?

PRESENT MIC: HOW DID I GUESS?! *Speaking* of studying – when I bumped into Canary yesterday – he explained that he was trying to practise his Quirk so he could make a good impression at this year's UA Sports Festival! *All* eyes are going to be directed towards the hero course, as per usual – but what most viewers fail to consider are the more background students in *equally* important courses, including the business, support and general studies departments! As the yearly commentator, it's always *super exciting* when an underdog rises through the ranks! If they show promise in heroics, my colleagues at UA can consider offering them a place in the hero course – and that is where Canary is aiming! How are you feeling about it all?

CANARY: I, um, well – I probably won't do that well… I haven't had the practise or opportunities the others have had – b-but I can try my best!

PRESENT MIC: THAT'S THE SPIRIT! I have invited Canary here today because, with a Quirk like his, he needs *confidence* if he wants to succeed! It's no easy feat, standing in front of all those people and *singing!* BUT – we all know a little encouragement can go a *long* way! THAT'S why Canary's joined us here on Put Your Hands Up Radio! And if I haven't scared him off – maybe I can get him to come back! What do you say?!

A brief moment of silence follows

PRESENT MIC: He shrugged everybody – that's not a no! Why don't the lot of you help him out?! Send us in some questions and your thoughts! But in the meantime – have a little listen to this – let the worries and stress of the day *float* away and we'll be back soon – when the song is up!

The *live* light turned off milliseconds later. Midoriya let out a sigh of relief that he didn't even realise he was holding in as he took of his headphones.

Present Mic didn't say anything initially; Midoriya had been bracing himself for an ear-piercing yell, but instead, he gave him a wide grin and an enthusiastic thumbs up.

"See?!" he began, "That wasn't so bad!"

"W-Was it?" Midoriya cringed, "I thought it was *h-horrible*!"

"Not at all!" Present Mic protested. "First of all, *you spoke."*

Midoriya blinked at him – it took a moment for the realisation to wash over him. He was *right* – he just *talked* on the *radio*. The conversation had felt so natural, that the dam between his mind and mouth had become obsolete. Sure, he stuttered and stammered, but he still *spoke*.

"Yeah?" his teacher grinned, reading the stunned expression on Midoriya's face. "What did I say?! CONFIDENCE!"

"I-I… I guess so!"

Present Mic pushed back off his desk, letting his wheelie-chair carry him to the window. He tugged on the blinds to pull them up. Midoriya's gaze was immediately caught by Aozora and Nakano, who both had brilliant smiles on their faces.

Nakano pressed one of the many buttons in front of him, speaking into a little microphone fixed in front of him, "You did fine there, kid," he insisted. "Really – I was worried that you wouldn't speak at all for a moment there – but you did good."

Aozora leaned over, pushing Nakano out of the way to reach the microphone. “Yeah, Canary! You’re really sweet and everyone’s going to *love* you – trust me on this one. You’ll have a fan base in *no time*. I will head it – guaranteed.”

“What was that bird called? A Kaka-what’s-it?” Present Mic strained to remember.

“K-Kakapo,” Midoriya replied nervously.

“How on *Earth* did you remember that?!”

“I-I don’t know… I just know a lot of random facts…” he admitted with a shrug.

“But why –,” he cut himself off, “actually, no – we’ll have this conversation on air. Wait a second, let me just see if we have any responses online yet…” Present Mic pulled the blinds back down. Aozora kept waving; making her seat sink down as she was obscured from view; it made Midoriya’s smile stretch a little further across his face.

It wasn’t long before the song came to an end and they were back on air. But there was a new life to Midoriya’s – no, *Canary’s* voice as the hour crept by.

He remembered his mother’s words from earlier that day:

“When you walk into that radio studio – you aren’t Izuku anymore, ok? You’re Canary! And Canary can be whoever you want him to be – you can be brave and kind and confident! Everything you are and more; everything you know *you can be.”*

Yeah… he could get used to this.

Chapter End Notes

So, I have an idea -

If any of you want, you could comment with questions and stuff FOR Canary so I don't have to make them up. We're going to get some more Radio Show moments across the next few chapters, so yeah - that could be fun!

On another note, I'm the weirdo who DOES know all sorts of

random facts and I can tell you off by heart that the Kakapo is the loudest bird with its mating call reaching around 132 decibels! (I looked it up to double check AND I WAS RIGHT HA HA!)

A Wild Ride

Chapter Notes

Just a few things to say -

First of all, thank you for all your questions for Canary! A lot really hit the spots that I wanted them to. They haven't been put to use in this chapter - but next time! I promise! Oh, and if you did ask a question and didn't give an alternate name (For example, WyvernSpirit asked a question and in this story the question would be asked by the name they gave, which was Kunie. A couple of others did the same) I'll either make up a random name or use your actual AO3 account name (as long as it doesn't involve any fandom references - there are a lot of cat ones, I noticed, but that's fine) XD

Secondly, I discovered that UA's school week runs from Monday to Saturday (according to the internet), so I just thought I'd give you a heads up if you didn't already know, also, officially there are about two weeks between the USJ incident and the Sports Festival!

Thirdly - THEORY TIME! (I'm running out of these by the way so I may have to stop soon XD) OH AND MANGA SPOILERS:

So, we know that if Eri gets better control over her powers, she may be able to get Mirio's Quirk back. BUT - what if Mirio's Quirk just naturally re-manifests? I mean, it's a possibility! What if we get some kind of attack going on and someone (possibly Eri) is in danger, so just - BOOM! A wild Quirk appears! XD

ANyWaYS BaCK TO CAnaRY!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The past few weeks had been the best of Midoriya's life so far – and that wasn't even an exaggeration. He'd never had so much to *say* to his Dad during their Friday video chats. He told him all about Shinso, Uraraka and Iida; how his problems with muteness had finally begun to fade; discovering his Quirk; the USJ; talking with *Present Mic*; being on his *radio show* – becoming Canary! He had been pacing around the living room as he told his stories; speaking in such an animated way

that he couldn't help but notice the shocked expressions of his prideful parents.

It had been a while since he felt so… *happy*.

But it was strange, being able to write the word *Canary* into an internet search engine and for results that *didn't* involve the bird or the island to appear. Of course, it had only been a one-time thing, so the mysterious being that was *Canary* wasn't *that* prevalent in the minds of the people of Japan.

Being back at school again on Friday, it felt like everything was finally back to normal… He hung out with Shinso alone at lunch; bumped into Uraraka and Iida on their way back, who were walking with another of their class 1-A friends, who introduced herself as Please-Call-Me-Tsu Asui. They briefly talked about their resilient teacher, being back to lead them despite him being covered in bandages from the USJ attack – and they were on their way. Not a word about Canary was uttered in Midoriya's presence. In fact, the only reminder the situation had occurred at all, was Present Mic. The hero asked him to stay after class on Saturday, giving him a couple of business cards and phone numbers, before inviting him to have a proper tour of his hero agency the following Sunday, which he graciously accepted.

So, of course Midoriya was surprised when, during his Sunday dance class, his new alter ego was finally mentioned.

"Any of you guys listen to the radio on Thursday?" questioned Megumi, one of the very few remaining people in Midoriya's class. She was doing her stretches, sticking out her leg at horrendous angles like it was nothing. Then again, that was her Quirk – an impossible flexibility.

"No…" replied Yuuto. He was the only other boy apart from Midoriya. Then again, there were only five of them in total, so the genders were split pretty evenly, all things considered. "Thursdays are boring, remember? Didn't we have this discussion, like, a couple of weeks ago?"

"Yeah, but not *this* Thursday!" Kasumi interjected.

"Oh! You listened too?!" Megumi replied excitably. Midoriya was watching her stretches with morbid fascination as he tuned his guitar.

"Uh huh – wasn't Canary just the sweetest?"

“Oh, he *so* was – hey, Izuku! Did you listen?” questioned Megumi.

Midoriya hesitated, before nodding in reply. It was as close to the truth as he was happy to get.

“Maybe you *know* Canary! He goes to UA after all.”

“Oh, this is a future hero, I presume?” asked the remaining member of the freestyle dance club, Mika.

“He *wants* to be,” Megumi contradicted, “but he’s not on the hero course! He’s got a *singing Quirk*.”

“Odd,” was all Mika said.

“Alright, everybody!” announced Mrs Kita, their dance teacher, who was still working despite being heavily pregnant. “Have you finished stretching?”

The others nodded simultaneously as Midoriya’s mind drifted away from the matter of Canary and back to his guitar.

The Sunday dance lessons had always been Midoriya’s favourite of the week. Saturdays were fine too, but they were right after school and often tired him out. The club was only allowed to run for half an hour on Sundays, and for as long as Midoriya could remember, the class had been impossibly small – and he’d been attending for years – even back when Mrs Kita was still Miss Minami. He’d always liked their teacher – mainly because she knew sign language. His fellow dancers had changed over the last year though. As they moved to different schools, they ran out of time or, in some cases, they had moved to a new house entirely – now being too far away to attend their humble lessons. Despite this, they were all on first name basis, mainly because Megumi was too insistent, and no one bothered complaining.

However, talking? Well, Midoriya had started suffering from his muteness problem before Megumi joined. Yuuto wasn’t that bad – but he felt awkward around the other girls, and for some reason, Midoriya as well. Kasumi had been there for a while, but she was very focused on dance; attending every class the little place had to offer. She often didn’t speak at all, much like Midoriya, but grew a little friendlier once Megumi wormed her way into the girl’s inner circle of friends. Mika was another story – incredibly beautiful and a wonderful dancer; she was the newest of the lot. Midoriya used to speak to some of them, but that had been a long time ago, and since Mrs Kita knew sign language, he had just slipped into the habit of not talking at all.

It was the same group on a Saturday, excluding Yuuto, who was too busy with pursuing a future career in medicine to keep dancing. Midoriya *did* dance on a Saturday. But on Sundays – well, this was why he enjoyed it so much – on *Sundays*, he played his instruments, whilst the others practised their various routines to his tunes. He loved it. It allowed his to keep practising despite giving up on his other lessons. It was the only reason he had kept going to both classes, and not just dropped one.

“You have your guitar this week, Izuku!” realised Megumi, bouncing up and down. “I haven’t seen the guitar in *ages* – I thought you preferred your violin!”

[*I don’t mind either*] he signed in reply, and their teacher dutifully translated. She sat down beside him with a sigh; her hand on her growing belly. She had told them before that this was her favourite class of the week. They were just there for fun (excluding perhaps Kasumi) and were consequently very little work. She helped them with their choreography; improved their transitions and poise; gave them one-on-one tutorials if they so desired, but other than that, were very easy going.

“What happened to it?” frowned Mika, glancing at the burnt spots over the wooden instrument.

Midoriya gave her a weak smile and shrugged, hoping she wouldn’t pry further. He *really* didn’t want to have to explain that he’d set the rain on fire.

“Doesn’t matter,” interjected Megumi, who often came over as rude, although they all knew by this point that she never meant it. “What song are you going to play?

Midoriya hesitated, fiddling with the fret of his guitar in thought.

“Do you know Pompeii?” asked Kasumi, who positioned herself beautifully in the centre of the room. “We were doing a dance to it earlier – I could teach you all,” she offered, eager at the chance to impress.

“Do you?” pressed Mika.

Midoriya smiled and nodded in reply. He was trying to remember the first few chords when the door to the dance studio slammed open.

“SORRY I’M LATE!” screamed the newcomer, who tossed her bag

across the room. It slid to Midoriya's feet. His eyes caught the UA logo, and slowly but surely, he raised his gaze to meet that of the intruder.

Bright pink skin, short hair, little horns and big black eyes. She was dressed in gym gear – tight fitting leggings and a loose top implying a clear confidence in her form. The worst thing was, Midoriya *recognised* her.

"Ah, everyone, this is Mina Ashido – I'm the one who should be sorry, I almost forgot you were coming," smiled Mrs Kita.

"Hey, no prob, Miss…?"

"Mrs Kita, lovely to meet you."

The five members of the dance troop stared at her, all completely frozen in rather bizarre positions.

"And to you too!" the pink girl exclaimed. "Hey, guys – you can call me Mina, everyone does! I usually go to the dance place a couple of streets down, but then I saw a flyer about *freestyle dance* and I was like, I'm so *totally* in! I do all sorts of stuff, but my studio has never offered a complete free-for-all! It just sounded so fun, so, here I am!"

Kasumi glared at Mina, her nose held high, obviously disproving of the newbie.

"Hi!" exclaimed Megumi. "Sorry, you rather surprised us! Mika here's the newest of us all, but she's hung around for four months! So, *yeah*, we're not that used to newcomers."

"Ah, *sorry!"* she sang. She seemed to be in a good mood. "Gosh, I'm *full* of apologies recently. I just came back from my *other* dance class. My friend told me about this cute guy on the radio, and we were listening to it and I *completely* forgot I was supposed to be here!"

"It seems we were both at fault," added Mrs Kita. "Well, Mina, we were just about to start a new routine. Kasumi suggested Pompeii as the music – do you have any other suggestions, or are you happy to begin?"

"Oh, Pompeii? I know that song! It's great – really powerful, you get me?"

"Well," interjected Kasumi harshly, "Izuku's doing us a guitar cover,

so it won't be exactly the same."

Mina spun on her heel, turning to face Midoriya; processing his presence for the first time.

"Hey… have we met?" she began, narrowing her eyes and pointing at him.

Midoriya shrunk back nervously.

"Izuku is mute," snapped Kasumi. She was still posed, ready to begin the dance.

"OH!" Mina shouted suddenly, "Oh my God – do you go to UA?! You know Ochako Uraraka?"

Midoriya was starting to pray for the world to swallow him up at this point.

"'Cause she's my classmate! She said she had a friend in class 1-C with green hair and freckles and who was selectively mute! That's *you*, isn't it?!"

"You go to UA?" questioned Yuuto.

"Oh yeah!" she replied. Midoriya sighed in relief as the attention was taken away from him. "I'm in the heroics course – class 1-A!" she exclaimed, punching the air.

"As in the class in that villain attack?"

"*The* one and only!" Mina answered with a hint of pride in her voice. She went on a rant about how they were all *so totally terrified* and how their teacher got *all like, banged up* but still turned up for class the next day.

That was when Kasumi cleared her throat pointedly. "Do you think we could get on with the lesson?" she snapped. "We don't have long until our slot's up."

"Sure! What are we doing then, just, whatever?" the hero student frowned.

"Well, *I'm* going to be showing the beginning of a dance that I have been working on in my ballet class. And the others were planning on mimicking some of the movements and adding their own style as the song progresses. That's how it usually works. Go now, Izuku."

Midoriya wavered for a moment, eyes flicking between Mina and his older dance-mates. He hadn't felt so awkward and out of place at dance for a very long time. But despite that, he mustered the courage to sink into the familiar tune:

~Pompeii – Bastille~

"Aw!" Megumi exclaimed, a smile stretching across her face. "This is one of those ones you know *really* well, isn't it? I love it when we find these!"

"Like you said earlier, this is a little tamer than the original version, Kasumi," acknowledged Mrs Kita, who was still struggling to untie the laces of her worn tap shoes. "So, you might want to relax your movements a little – make sure to keep up with the tempo."

Her prized student nodded surely, returning to the starting pose; making sure Mina could see her *superior* stance.

As the first verse began, Kasumi gracefully moved into her dance, her face serious and her body controlled. The others watched her intricate twists and turns in awe – quite a contrast to the fiery meaning behind the song.

It wasn't long before Megumi pranced to her own corner of the room, copying her friends dance in a near perfect mirror image, making up her own steps as she failed to predict what Kasumi would do next.

As the song picked up, Yuuto and Mika joined in. Yuuto was as strong and Mika was delicate. Together they made a wonderful couple in dance; although Midoriya was sure that the two were never together romantically, their dances tended to make him second guess.

Mina was absolutely ecstatic. She clearly didn't know where to look – her gaze rapidly changing direction as she flicked from Kasumi to Mika and the others. But then Midoriya caught her gaze in the mirrored walls, and her eyes were transfixed on only him and the way he played his guitar. She seemed to find it more entrancing than the grace the others portrayed.

Then the chorus began, and Midoriya was rather stunned when it

wasn't only Megumi's voice which filled the room – but Mina's as well. Neither of them were record-label worthy, but they didn't seem to care – they were just… *enjoying* themselves.

"…*Does it almost feel like you've been here before?"* they sang.

Megumi was still dancing elegantly at Kasumi's side at this point, careful to give her friend enough space for her movements. Mina, meanwhile, was humming to herself, swaying back and forth and clicking her fingers in time to the beat.

As soon as the chorus ended, the pink-skinned girl leapt into her on place in the hall with a surprisingly well-timed summersault. Her dance was far less graceful than the others', who were all following Kasumi's lead. Mina's movements were coordinated, but much faster and even a little robotic.

"In your pose as the dust – settled around us…"

The girl was *breakdancing* and *somehow* made it fit the music – it was quite a sight to behold.

However, it was the music that Midoriya was focused on. He'd played the tune many times before, as Megumi had predicted, but never before had he felt so… *drawn* to it. He didn't even realise he knew all the lyrics – but suddenly they were there, waiting on the tip of his tongue.

"*And as you close your eyes!"* Mina laughed, spinning and leaping in the joy she brought to the music.

Midoriya so desperately wanted to join in; to sing along! It was a strange feeling – new to him. It had been a long time since he'd had to *stop* himself from talking – or, singing…

But that couldn't have been a good idea – to sing along. Not to *this* tune. No, he'd seen what he could do – setting fire to the rain was bad enough; at least no one was around. If he started singing *Pompeii* in a small, enclosed space, with other people around… who knows what could happen? Could he turn them all to ash – bring storm clouds of volcanic rock raining down upon them?

Soon enough, the song came to an end – and the dance lesson drew to a close. Midoriya was packing away his guitar when Mina bounced

over to him.

“That was so cool!” she exclaimed. “You’re super good at the guitar – like, I think I actually prefer your guitar version to the actual song!”

Midoriya blushed and gave her a little bow.

“Will you be coming back next week, Ashido?” questioned Mrs Kita.

“Sure! You guys do Saturdays too, right?”

“We do – will you consider coming to both?”

“Well if Saturdays are as awesome as today’s lesson, then sure! I think I can make it!”

“Then we’ll see you then,” the pregnant woman smiled.

Midoriya was walking out the door when Mina suddenly appeared by his side again, after handing in her starting fee.

“Ochako never mentioned you did music and dance,” Mina acknowledged. “I know I’ve said it already, but it’s really awesome!”

Midoriya hesitated. Mina stopped walking as he did, a frown stretching across her face as Midoriya pulled out his phone. He tapped on the notes app and began to write. Once he was finished, he handed the device over to his new dance partner for her to read.

“Can you not tell anyone at UA about this – I’d rather they didn’t know,” she read aloud. “Aw, but it’s so sweet! I’m sure everyone would think the same way!”

Midoriya shook his head surely, taking his phone back. *Please*, he added to the message.

Mina sighed and smiled at him, “*Fine* – on one condition!”

He cocked his head to one side to show his interest.

“You give me your number!” she announced dramatically.

Midoriya flushed red and grudgingly gave his phone back to her so she could get the necessary details off it.

“There!” Mina exclaimed as she finished exchanging details. “Now we can talk without having to worry about speaking!”

He gave her a meek smile and texted, *Thank you* to her.

“No prob!” she laughed, “I’ve got to go – or I’ll miss my train. See you at school, guitar boy!” And with that, the terrifying encounter was over.

Midoriya stood there, in the street, for a few moments, slowly getting over his anxiety. That was when his phone vibrated again. He expected it to be Mina, who had inputted her name as *Alien Queen* in his phone, something that he supposed would be her future hero name, but, instead it was his mother:

Mum: *Where are you, Izuku? We’re going to be late for the tour at the radio station!*

He gasped, fumbled with his phone, and then took off in the opposite direction to Mina as fast as his legs would carry him.

His day wasn’t quite over yet.

His mum had been exaggerating when she said they would be late – as most mothers did. Midoriya still had time to change, have a shower and even have a quick bite to eat before the two of them left to get the train. Soon enough, they were standing inside the hero agency, waiting by the receptionists’ desk.

“There he is!” Aozora exclaimed as the elevator doors opened and she hurried into view. “And you must be Mrs Canary!” she laughed, “Inko Midoriya, yes?”

“Yes, lovely to meet you,” Inko smiled, shaking the blue woman’s hand.

“Your son has got a real knack for the radio, it seems,” Aozora said, showing off her pointy teeth in a wide grin. “He’s only been on one show and our Thursday evening has never had so many replays online!”

“Really?” his mother replied in surprise.

“Really,” said one of the receptionists – the one who liked to give Midoriya finger guns as he walked by. “People think you’re sweet, and

they're kind of invested in your story."

"M-My story?" Midoriya repeated without thinking about it.

"Yeah!" said Aozora. "You know the, I need more confidence so I can be brave enough to use my Quirk in the biggest sporting event of the year and get into UA's hero course?" she explained very quickly. "And a future hero that sings? Yeah, honey – you're gonna have a fan base before you know it!"

Midoriya blushed and kicked at the floor. He was positive that he wouldn't be hanging around the radio station for long enough to get a *fan base*.

"Well, follow me – and we'll start our *official* tour!" Aozora finished, leading them back over to the elevator. She was telling his mother all about the 'White-Noise Team' that she'd shown Midoriya last time as she tapped various buttons in the elevator.

"We've got fifteen floors here, if you include ground level," she eventually explained. "Some places are restricted, for example, floor four is for our underground heroes only, and you need a special card to access it. If I tried tapping floor flour, I would need to swipe my access card here." She pulled out an orange card from her pocket and tried to do exactly that, but the whole system just glowed red and cancelled the elevator's destination. "See? I'm not cleared for it – I can go most places, but not to the hero floors. Floor five is for over-ground heroes – I go there occasionally, but I'm not cleared to visit by myself."

She ended up taking them to floor three, revealing the hustle and bustle of lunch time activity in a sort of break room. "Sometimes we get heroes coming here to have lunch!" she explained, "They're not even from our agency – just good friends from this part of town. Did you know that we're considered the *best* news company to deal with hero interviews? It's because of Present Mic's overview – he makes sure we're not too intrusive, and consequently, we get the most business!"

"So, where was the White-Noise Team you mentioned?" Inko asked curiously.

"Ah, yeah – they're floors seven and eight. I used to work there, so I still have clearance for floor eight, where they do all their call-ins and stuff, but floor seven's more private. Sometimes we take people there after they've rung our emergency lines. It's really quite homely."

Next, the elevator doors opened on floor eleven. “This is our news station!” she proclaimed proudly. They didn’t stay there long – there were a lot of people hurrying around frantically from room to room, clearly in a rush. “We’re pretty busy at the moment,” Aozora admitted. “We’re the official radio hosts of the UA Sports Festival, and of course, Present Mic always does the commentary. They’re gearing up at the moment – hyping up the public, getting resources ready, you know, the usual stuff.”

All this talk about the Sports Festival was giving Midoriya a headache.

They were shown quite a few other floors after that, visiting the other radio areas as well as some of the offices. They even said hello to some of the heroes and sidekicks! – which Midoriya was very happy about.

Eventually though, after having a quick look at the offices on the top floor (because Aozora had to pick up a few things from her place) they were back at familiar floor thirteen – where Present Mic’s Radio show broadcasted from.

They sat down in the waiting room outside the studio. Izuku and Inko sat together on one of the larger sofas whilst Aozora sat opposite them happily, leaving a small stack of papers on the table between them.

“Don’t mind that,” she said as she caught Midoriya glancing at it. “It’s not all about you.”

That didn’t do much to lessen his nerves.

“So,” Aozora began, “how did you find your little Thursday introduction to the radio world?!”

Midoriya glanced between her and his mother hesitantly, before giving her a slight shrug, “I-I guess it w-wasn’t as bad as I t-though it would b-be.”

Inko smiled proudly at him. Midoriya wasn’t sure if that was because he didn’t downright say it was terrible and he never wanted to do it again or if it was because he actually *spoke*. Midoriya was quite proud of himself for speaking, considering what had happened earlier that day.

“I’d say that was a positive response!” Aozora concluded; she seemed rather pleased with herself. “As you can see, Sundays aren’t very busy here.” Midoriya wouldn’t have guessed. “There are less people

commuting, so less listen to the radio! Present Mic's out on patrol at the moment. But he should be back *any* minute to join us."

Midoriya nodded in understanding.

"Anyway, as I said earlier, you've got quite the potential as a little radio star," she grinned. "UA hero course aside, you'd do well here regardless!"

Inko grasped her son's hand, sporting a wide smile on her face.

"You're *new*," Aozora continued to explain, "people like new things from time to time. Then there's your whole story like we said – and there's a certain *mystery* about you! Like, *who is Canary?* Did you know that question has been searched over five hundred times over the last three days alone? And I seriously think that's an outdated number by now – I looked late last night."

Midoriya blinked at her. It probably shouldn't have come as a surprise to him, but nevertheless, it did.

"Moreover," she continued, waving Midoriya's surprise away, "You're young. People your age listen to our radio mainly because of our music hours – and of course, none-stop-music-Fridays. But when there's someone who they can *relate* to on the radio, then they're convinced to listen for a little longer – and they tell their friends – and then *more* people tune in. You see where I'm going with this?"

He nodded hesitantly – still a little shocked by how much they all seemed to like him.

"Basically, long story short – you're good for business! I know Present Mic brought you here to help build up your confidence, but now you've shown us what having someone like you on our show can do, we're more than happy to make this a *permanent* thing."

The door was thrown open as Midoriya's mouth did the same.

"*Heeelllooo!"* cheered an all too familiar voice, and Present Mic vaulted over the empty armchair beside Aozora, almost making it fall over, and sinking into it with a sigh of relief. After a moment, he leant forward, extending his hand to Midoriya's mother. "Nice to meet you, Mrs Midoriya – I'm Present Mic, Izuku's homeroom teacher!" he exclaimed.

Inko shook his hand meekly as Present Mic turned back to Aozora,

“What did I miss?”

“We were *just* talking about why your trial run was such a success!” Aozora replied eagerly.

“Ah yeah!” he grinned widely. “Did Aozora tell you about our White-Noise Team?”

The three of them nodded.

“Well, I just checked in with them, and – I’m not going say much because it’s a private matter – but someone who called in with a *problem* today said they tuned into our radio for the first time and heard the number to call for help only after hearing about it from all the talk about *you!”* he announced dramatically.

Midoriya stared. It took a moment to process his words, “R-Really?”

“Yeah!” he grinned. “So, what do you say, Canary – want to come back again?”

He exchanged looks with his mother, who’s prideful grin and excited nod convinced him to follow suit and gave his mentor a determined nod.

All three adults cheered for him.

“Phew!” Aozora sighed, “I was worried for a moment you were going to chicken out!”

“Now *that* obstacle’s out of the way – we’ve got one more to face!” Present Mic continued, glancing at Aozora’s pile of paperwork, “Well, maybe two.”

“Ah, yes,” said the co-manager. “The Sports Festival isn’t far away, so if we want to build up your confidence enough in time, you might want to consider doing more shows than just the Thursday slot.”

“M-More?!”

“If it’s not too much!” the blue-skinned woman added hastily.

“It shouldn’t be,” said Inko. “You have to keep Fridays free for your father to call in – he works abroad,” she explained to them. “Then other than that it’s only Saturday and Sunday with dance class – you finished all your music lessons a while ago.”

Aozora gasped, “You *dance?* Ok, you’re just too good for this world.”

Izuku was growing redder by the second.

“What about Tuesdays?” interjected Present Mic.

Aozora reached towards her papers; fumbled through them for a moment and eventually located what looked like a schedule. “You might end up having other guests alongside the two of you, but that shouldn’t be too much of a problem as long as you get them to sign a none-disclosure agreement about Canary’s identity – which I’m *presuming* you aren’t going to reveal until the Sports Festival?” she looked to Midoriya for the answer, who simply nodded in confirmation. “Great, great – same time on Tuesdays then, that would work.”

“How many shows is that before the Sports Festival then?” the hero frowned.

“Err… well, the event itself is still a couple of weeks away, right?”

“I *think* so?”

“You’re hosting it!”

“TWO WEEKS AWAY – RIGHT, GOT IT!”

Aozora sighed exasperatingly and turned back to Midoriya. “That gives us five shows as long as you can join us on both Tuesdays and Thursdays? Six thirty to seven thirty?”

After another look at his mother, Midoriya faltered before sealing his fate with a final, affirmative nod.

His two, well *co-workers*, he supposed – were absolutely ecstatic.

“This is going to be awesome, trust me on this one Canary,” Aozora grinned. Her smile was a little *too* wide to be natural. Maybe it had something to do with her Quirk… Right, no, *focus*.

It turns out, they had already planned on Midoriya saying yes – and had nearly everything in place. The paperwork which Aozora now spread across the desk for both Midoriyas to look over was almost complete; only lacking the two’s signatures here and there. As it turned out, Present Mic had gone to *Principal Nedzu* about the whole situation and had gotten official permission from the school to let

Midoriya actually *work* at the radio station. Midoriya hadn't realised he was really getting a part time job here – with a decent pay and everything. Well, at least it helped pay for his train tickets back and forth from the radio station – and perhaps he could start paying for his dance lessons too! Anything to help his mother out.

It wasn't long before Canary was an official member of Put Your Hands Up Radio. Midoriya was clutching an orange card, similar to Aozora's, as he was led all the way back down to reception, with clearance to all radio related areas, and a particular door that the co-manager had yet to show him through.

"Now *this*," she grinned, "Is called the *backdoor*." She through it open to reveal an ordinary corridor, leading all the way to the back of the building. "I just realised I said that really dramatically but I was being serious – it's literally the backdoor."

As Izuku and Inko were signed out of the building, Aozora ushered them through the *backdoor*, closing it behind her. When she opened the final door at the end of the empty corridor, Midoriya didn't quite know what he had been expecting. It revealed a long, metal staircase, which made plenty of noise as they hurried down it to a very narrow street, concealed behind the towering building, amongst what seemed like ordinary, residential buildings.

"The *backdoor* is a secret to the general public," Aozora told them in a theatrically hushed voice. "So, you're going to have to keep it quiet for us. It's a bit of a longwinded way into the building, but it avoids any hustle and bustle out front! It's especially useful for big time celebrities who are trying to avoid the press at the main entrance to the agency. With that key card of yours, you can unlock it from the outside! I thought it might be a useful thing to show you – if you want to keep that secret identity of yours," she cackled.

Before long, the three of them reached a rather quiet road, lined with the occasional, rather empty shop, and one very quaint café. From the street they could barely see the rooftop of the building they had just left behind. Not one of the few passers-by gave them a second glance as they went about their everyday lives. It was the perfect escape route for a busy hero.

"We can't thank you enough!" said Inko, bowing before Aozora, and Izuku quickly did the same.

"No, no – thank *you!"* she insisted, giving them a bow too. "This is

going to be a real wild ride – I can already tell – and I'm more than happy to be a part of it!"

"I'm not sure if I am yet…" Midoriya muttered.

Aozora *howled* with laughter. Maybe she had super hearing; he had been very quiet – he didn't even realise he'd said that out loud, which was a revelation he hadn't come across in a while.

"Well! I'll see you on *Tuesday* then, Canary – hey, check out the website tomorrow – we'll update it to show the new schedule as soon as we can!" And without any more of a goodbye, a satisfied Aozora turned on her heel and literally skipped back up the alleyway.

The two Midoriyas stared at her for a moment or so, even after she had vanished from view. Inko then pulled on Izuku's sleeve, tears budding at the corner of her eyes as she pulled him into a hug. She needn't say a word to express her feelings as they held each other there. Izuku melted into the warmth of her familiar hold – a wave of relief washing over him now the stress invoking encounter had come to an end.

But he couldn't help but let a smile creep across his face, for despite all his worries, he knew this was only the beginning. Or, in Aozora's terminology – the beginning of a real wild ride.

Chapter End Notes

> You know what's funny, when you're minding your own business, writing the story as planned - and a random character you didn't think would be there just BURSTS through the door like WHAD UP LOSERS?! And you have to change the plan because you hadn't expected it to happen and wHY BrAIN DO YoU Do THiS TO mE!?
>
> Songs used in this chapter:
>
> Pompeii - Bastille - Guitar cover by James Bartholomew https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nolOBHZICQ
>
> And here's the link to vote whether Canary should get One for All or not! The vote's SUPER close at the moment, I mean, not as bad

as Brexit BUT STILL TOO CLOSE FOR MY LIKING:

https://www.poll-maker.com/poll2411733xaBa84a69-69

Canary Takes Flight

Chapter Notes

Hello and welcome to favouritism 101 with your host, Cloud!

It's a tight competition for spot number three, but I'm going to have to give it to the wonderful **awkwardgirlnerdgirl_lex** who has literally been with me since the beginning of my first fic Displacement – so she has to be mentioned, sorry guys. My first commenter will forever be loved.

Coming in at number two has to be **Toughtfullybeautifulwitch**, whom I adore despite the blaring, although likely on purpose, spelling mistake in their name – because they've started fanart for me guys. You want my love? Art. Art is the way to my heart.

And FOLLOWING that example is the one, the only – **Smallivemoon**, whose name *continues* to blow my mind. The word *small* and *alive* are like, combined into one monster and I have NO idea how to say that out loud. And why are they my favourite? ART.

http://aminoapps.com/p/ouitlv

And it's ADORABLE.

I have *fanart* guys. FANART.

And the more I look at the word fanart, the more it morphs into the word fart.

ANYWAYS BACK TO CANARY BEFORE I LOSE MY MIND

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya had two new notebooks. One, he'd mentioned before – titled Quirk Analysis, was just that, analysis on his Quirk. He'd discovered a

lot of new things ever since he'd started officially practising after school hours. Although Midoriya had yet to speak to the elusive Principal Nedzu, he had been permitted to use that sports hall for himself for one hour after school whenever he could, meaning Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, because his dad didn't call until a little later on a Friday evening anyway. Present Mic oversaw a few of them. He felt more than a little nervous, singing in front of people. That was probably why the hero started timing his arrival so that he only appeared when Midoriya was in mid song. It felt a little less awkward then.

Whilst most of that notebook involved information on what a particular song could do, the most important pages at the moment, were those detailing the specifics of his ability – or, more accurately, his limitations. And he'd made some very interesting discoveries in the short space of time that he'd had his Quirk. He put that down to putting so much energy into researching other Quirks, so when it came to his own, it was a piece of cake.

Quirk Name – Songbird Living Song Music…something

By singing a song, an ability is granted for the user to manipulate to their will whilst the song continues. The more practise put into a particular song, the longer effects last after the song has finished, the stronger it is, and the shorter the cool-down effect is between uses.

COOLDOWN:

If an ability is used, and the song is then sang again immediately after, the Quirk will not activate. The cooldown period starts as soon as the power turns off – whether that be because the song was interrupted or stopped part way through, or because the song came to an end. A new song has a cool-down length of roughly seventy-two hours (three days), which decreases slowly as the song is practised, but there will always be some kind of cool down. For example, the song Wings, which I have used on numerous occasions, still has a limit exceeding twenty-four hours, and that timespan is decreasing at a much slower rate than how it began.

ABILITIES:

Abilities vary from song to song, depending on how the user interprets the song themselves. Someone may think a song has a different meaning, but it relies solely on the user's opinion. Only one ability can be used per song. Mashups seem to have no effect as several songs are used at once. As soon

as one song is stopped, its power stops working. Its only benefit is being able to transition quickly from one ability to another at a higher power level than just starting a new song again. The strength of an ability increases as the song progresses, following how the music swells. It's at its strongest near the end of the song and in choruses. I can use an ability if I skip straight to the chorus, but it will be weaker and the same cooldown period applies. Some songs grant the same ability but at slightly different power levels and have varied applications. Other songs seem to give no power at all, especially if they're super short or have few lyrics. Some just don't give powers for some reason. If I don't feel a connection to the music, or dislike it in any way, shape or form, my Quirk won't activate. If I forget a lyric or do something wrong, that counts as interrupting the flow of the music and the power shuts off; the cooldown period beginning.

LINGERING EFFECTS:

If a song ends un-interrupted or I purposely stop it at a suitable point, like when the chorus finishes, the ability the song grants can last even whilst not singing. Lingering effects cut off if I try to start using another song. The power lasts longer the more I practise a particular song.

AFFECTING OTHER PEOPLE:

My Quirk currently has three directions from which it can be easily applied:

Some songs only work on me, only giving me control, for example, songs with fire abilities – only I can control the fire. Some songs affect anyone the sound reaches, excluding myself, for example, sleeping songs. It works as long as the sound reaches them, so plugging ears doesn't help. Some songs affect everyone including myself, such as strength enhancing abilities.

I believe I will have more control over this with more practise, for example, I might be able to focus a power onto only one person even whilst others are listening. This has only worked once before, where I was able to make a song which should have affected everyone but me, give the ability to only myself. Granted, it wasn't very useful and I fell asleep but that doesn't matter.

My Quirk doesn't work through recordings or amplifiers. If I use a microphone, anyone who is close to me is still affected, but people who are far away enough so that they can only hear because of the amplification are not affected.

IF YOU USE TOO MANY SONGS IN A SHORT TIME-SPAN YOU WILL BE FATIGUED.

It seemed confusing at first. Well, there was rather a lot of information on it written down here. But, once you read through it, it became clear that much of the information was simply repeated in several different scenarios. And, in actual fact, there was a certain simplicity to Midoriya's Quirk. But perhaps that was something only he could see. It was *his* power after all. He still felt giddy just *thinking* about that.

But Midoriya had *two* notebooks. We're just going to ignore the other thirteen hero analysis notebooks and focus on these two.

The *other* notebook he had dubbed his Panic Book. Why? Well, that would be because he turned to it when he panicked. Another reason would be because everything he did now revolving Canary turned into a panic. The third and final reason was that it was what Aozora called it when she saw him jotting stuff down in it as he sat nervously in the waiting room before his second show.

On the very first page of the notebook, he had written a to-do list. It was rather high aiming, but he hadn't planned on anyone ever seeing the inside of this notebook, so that fact didn't apply:

1. *Practise and analyse your Quirk until you know it as much as anyone who might have had their Quirk for ten years would, i.e. like an ordinary person.*
2. *Gain your confidence on the radio until you are able to talk without hesitation on air.*
3. *Convert that confidence to real life so talking to ordinary people in reality isn't a challenge.*
4. *Take that confidence a step further so you can happily sing without any anxiety issues.*
5. *Tell Shinso.*
6. *Take part in the Sports Festival*
7. *Make a good enough impression to allow you to be offered a place in the hero course.*
8. *Transfer to the hero course.*

Yes, number five was rather important. He also might have to consider moving that number up the list. Something he had *not* predicted, although probably should have, was how popular the character of Canary would really end up being.

“Hey! Canary!” Aozora yelled.

Midoriya looked up from his notebook. He was perched on the armchair nestled in the furthest corner of the room. If he was going to be staying here – then that armchair would be his, no questions asked.

“Present Mic’s just put the song on – you’re on in three minutes and counting! Get your feathers in there!” she finished, talking rather loudly because her headphones were still over her head as she bobbed side to side to whatever tune was drifting across the radio.

Midoriya took a deep breath, something he often found himself doing before big events, and stood up, leaving his things in a pile surrounding his armchair – it was already starting to resemble a bird’s nest and Canary had only claimed the space less than half an hour ago.

Present Mic did a celebratory spin in his chair when Midoriya entered the room. He was in his hero costume this time, most likely because he had to wear it at UA and hadn’t taken it off yet.

Midoriya still wasn’t too sure how to handle himself in the studio – how much noise he was supposed to be making; where he could go; what he could touch without ruining the entire show… This was why he was as quiet as he could be, almost tiptoeing across the room towards the same chair he chose last time – he could never be too careful.

“How are you feeling, my little listener? Wait, no, you’re not really a little listener anymore, are you?! Let’s make that my little *co-host* until I can find a better alliteration, huh?” the hero laughed.

“U-Um, I-I’m fine…” Midoriya stammered as he sat down.

“You don’t sound fine!” Present Mic retorted. He was pointing at him, his finger so close to Midoriya’s nose despite the width of the table that it was almost touching it. “You sound all panicked again – where’s the happy Canary we left off with last time, huh?!”

Midoriya gave him a meek smile, “I-I just… well, s-sometimes I h-hear people talking about me. A-And I know all those people are going t-to

be listening today and I'm really worried that maybe they won't like me anymore and this will just end up being one big disaster and I'm going to mess up and –"

"Woah, woah, woah!" Present Mic interrupted, "You're going to give yourself a panic attack, and no one wants that."

Midoriya's hands *were* shaking as he fiddled with the headphones that were laid out before him. He wasn't sure if he was more nervous the second time around as he had been the first – but either way, what he was feeling was certainly far from good.

"You're not going to mess up," continued Present Mic. He had adopted his calmer voice, the one he used when addressing panicked civilians and, more often than not, Midoriya. He'd come to recognise it well now. "People like you for being *you*. So, you don't need to worry about *messing up*, because there's nothing *to* mess up! We're going to do *exactly* what we did last time, so there's no need to fear, alright? The only difference is we've actually got some questions lined up and a bit more of a plan. Just follow my lead and I promise you'll do absolutely *great!"*

Midoriya let a small smile creep back over his face.

"You know, I've got a stellar way to deal with anxiety for those who have a bit of a problem with it," the hero told him.

Midoriya blinked up at him. He took that as an expression of interest.

"Turn your fear into excitement!" he said dramatically. "Think about all these *negative* emotions that you're feeling, and say, hey, you know what? – this doesn't *have* to be negative! Say, I'm not shaking because I'm nervous – it's because I'm *excited!* I'm excited to begin! To get this other with – whatever floats your boat!"

He frowned at his teacher. Well, like his mother had said – here, in the radio studio, he wasn't Izuku – he was *Canary*. Izuku may be nervous, but Canary could be *excited!* Perhaps separating the two wasn't the best idea, but for now, it was a way forward – and Midoriya was running rather thin on those.

Midoriya's smile grew that little bit wider, "O-Ok!"

Present Mic clapped his hands, "There he is! There's the Canary I was waiting for! Just keep being you and *roll* with it! Put your headphones on, Songbird! Listen to the end of this song with me and then we can

start!”

Present Mic's Radio Show!

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:30 to 19:30

Canary's Hour

PRESENT MIC: *YYYEEEAAAHHH!*

A brief moment of silence follows

PRESENT MIC: Can I get a *YEAH* from Canary?!

CANARY: O-Oh! Err, err – y-yay?

PRESENT MIC: This is becoming routine and you know what? – we're going to stick with it! ANYWAY! A big fat *welcome* to a new official segment of Put Your Hands Up Radio! We talked about it earlier, but here we are! Welcome to Canary's hour!

CANARY: W-Wait, really?

PRESENT MIC: YES!

CANARY: It's named after m-me?

PRESENT MIC: *Well*, you are the whole reason we're doing it!

CANARY: Um… thank you?

PRESENT MIC: WHY ARE YOU SAYING THANK YOU?!

A faint squeal is heard

CANARY: Why are you s-so *loud?!*

Present Mic's howling laughter can be heard, most likely quietened from its original volume

CANARY: He's r-really loud! I-I've been listening to his radio show f-for… forever! A-And I don't know why, b-but I didn't expect him to be so loud in real life?

Present Mic continues to laugh uncontrollably

CANARY: O-Of course, the volume's all c-changed on y-your end of the radio. But h-here? Here I can still hear how l-loud he is! And I keep reaching up to my ears t-to cover them with my hands but then the headphones are in the way and I press them closer to my face and it gets even *louder* a-and… and it's just a vicious circle of decibels really.

A moment of silence is endured as Present Mic recovers

CANARY: A-Are you ok?

Present Mic sighs loudly

PRESENT MIC: He looks like a little ball of sunshine, but in reality – he has a cruel side. I feel like we're bringing out the worst in him! But then, I remember he's Canary and he'll never change – CANARY, TELL US A FACT!

CANARY: Did you know the loudest sound ever recorded was the explosion of the volcano Krakatoa in 1883?

PRESENT MIC: …That was a *very* quick response – I guess you were thinking about that already?

CANARY: Uh huh. Apparently the sound travelled around the world four times and ruptured the eardrums of people standing over forty miles away.

PRESENT MIC: Huh – How many decibels does it need to be to burst eardrums?

CANARY: …S-Shouldn't you *know* that?

PRESENT MIC: *Pfft!* Of *course,* I do… But you know everything so I was just checking if you knew!

CANARY: I-I don't know *everything* – like how loud a sound needs to be to burst your eardrums, for instance.

PRESENT MIC: WELL THEN LOOKS LIKE WE'RE MOVING ON!

CANARY: Wait, but isn't it a bit of a problem that you don't know how loud you can –

PRESENT MIC: WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS TO GET TO!

CANARY: But *I* have a question!

PRESENT MIC: You don't need to raise your hand – and if it's about noise, I don't want to hear it.

A brief moment of silence follows

PRESENT MIC: Yeah, you lower that hand. ANYWAY, as I said, we still have *plenty* of questions from you wonderful listeners from last Thursday and the time in between! So, we thought that we could start off our first *official* Canary's hour with a Canary Questionnaire!

CANARY: W-We are?

PRESENT MIC: YES! *So*, if Canary could so kindly turn to his screen – yes, that one – you will see your list of questions!

CANARY: Are we answering *all* of these?!

PRESENT MIC: PROBABLY NOT!

CANARY: O-Ok… um – do I just pick one, or…?

PRESENT MIC: Pick and click!

CANARY: Ok… I'll just click on something r-random then…

PRESENT MIC: OUR FIRST QUESTION THEN!

CANARY: So… is this from twitter or…?

PRESENT MIC: We get most of our questions from social media! We should set you up an account! ACTUALLY, LET'S DO THAT ON AIR IN A MINUTE THAT WOULD BE GREAT!

CANARY: Oh, ok – but, um, this question is from White Wave…

PRESENT MIC: AND THEY SAY – from someone who's bad at people-ing – *my new favourite phrase* – you sound like if a puppy got turned into a human being! Ha!

Distant, barely audible squeaks can be heard

PRESENT MIC: He's doing that thing now where he goes really red and curls up in a ball – and *there he goes* – yep, he's turned his chair away from me. RIGHT – White Wave's question, getting to the point, is: can you sing?! Is your Quirk really good pitch? Well, little listener,

that is a good hypothesis! *However*, even though that would be cool – I can't see how it could be useful in heroics?

CANARY: Oh! Pitch control would be really cool – depending on how well you could manipulate it. If you go high enough and are able to direct your voice, you could do things like shatter glass and knock people out and… and that would be awesome but I can't do that.

PRESENT MIC: But he *CAN* SING! And *really* well! *Annnddd* he's returned to the ball. CANARY – CANARY THE NEXT QUESTION IS FROM *Lilnome* – and they ask how old you are! Are you happy saying that on air?

Undistinguishable muttering is heard

PRESENT MIC: Can we… can we repeat that?

CANARY: I-I think I'll just let y-you guess. I-I'm either in my second or first year at U-UA.

PRESENT MIC: LET'S HAVE ONE MORE QUESTION BEFORE OUR NEXT SONG THEN!

CANARY: Err… Oh – I'm not sure how to pronounce your name? So sorry if it's wrong but D-Drakeneo? Is that right? Um, you asked – ha, ha – how would you describe Presentation Michael as a teacher?

PRESENT MIC: I'm not liking where this is going.

CANARY: Well, firstly – *loud.*

PRESENT MIC: *And* we've gone in a full circle!

CANARY: Secondly, um… I'm just deciding w-what is a good idea to say now that he's sitting opposite me.

PRESENT MIC: And what's *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN?!

CANARY: He's very *charismatic.*

A moment of silence

PRESENT MIC: I'm not sure how that is an insult? But I bet it is – RIGHT – SONG, WE'RE GOING TO GO TO A SONG BEFORE HE RATS OUT ALL MY TEACHING SECRETS.

CANARY: There was a paper aeroplane stuck in his hair for our entire

lesson the other day – he didn't even notice.

PRESENT MIC: CUE THE MUSIC!

Present Mic was smiling because *Midoriya* was smiling – it was infectious.

"See?" Yamada began, "What did I tell you? Everyone loves you!"

Midoriya took off his headphones; still smiling broadly as he glanced at the remaining questions on his screen – and there were a lot of them.

"I didn't tell you earlier because I didn't want you to freak out more than you were already," he continued.

That got Midoriya's attention, making him look up in surprise, his smile quickly fading.

"Don't worry! It's a good thing – we've got a *very* high listener count today. I'm talking *way* more than what was on last Thursday. And they're here because they want to hear *you!* And judging by the fact that the number *isn't* going down but is instead steadily *increasing* – I would say you're giving them exactly what they want!"

The smile crept back across his face, "Thank you."

"For what?!"

"For… giving me a chance – a-and being so nice to me. Even before I had a Quirk – I've never had a teacher who has… put this much time and effort into helping me," he admitted, twisting back and forth in his chair; avoiding Yamada's gaze.

He didn't say anything for a moment, processing Midoriya's words. He hadn't really put much thought into Midoriya's past before – but then it clicked. He was mute *because* he was Quirkless. People saw the small, Quirkless boy and wrote him off before he had a chance to show him he was so much more than his condition. He was smart, kind and funny – he had a big brain and an even bigger heart, if that were possible. But despite all that, no one had really cared before. And so, the kid must have fell silent; slipped into the shadows,

unnoticed. Perhaps it was even worse than that. He could have done it on purpose, as a way of avoiding the attention. Maybe it wasn't just dance lessons that made him excellent at evading dodgeballs.

Midoriya wasn't the first kid he'd brought with him on the radio. There had been a few in the past who needed a little confidence boost – several refused the offer, but the ones who took it up were rather thankful for it. Despite all that though, none had been quite so popular with the radio's audience than Canary. Aozora was right, it wasn't just his personality – people liked the story; they were eager to see what he would become. Present Mic felt the same way, but he also couldn't help but think about what could have happened had he not gone and spoken to Midoriya that day in the sports hall – had Midoriya never even discovered his Quirk. What would have happened to him? What would his future have looked like?

"Um, Present Mic, Sir?"

Yamada blinked, "Sorry there, co-host – got lost in my own world for a second." He smiled fondly. Screw him – he was very guilty of favouritism. Then again, one could say he just wanted to give Midoriya as good a shot at life as everyone else had (or maybe a little beyond that. Hey, plus ultra!). "You're a real good kid, Canary. Awesome Quirk or no – you're gonna make an amazing hero."

Midoriya's smile wobbled a little. "T-Thanks, Cockatoo."

"Oh, I'm Cockatoo again now, am I?!"

He rubbed his eyes, laughing and nodding.

"Well then, I accept my fate."

PRESENT MIC: And welcome BACK!

CANARY: Yay.

Present Mic stifles his laughter

PRESENT MIC: What is with that yay? ANYWAY – I thought we'd shake things up a bit!

CANARY: Oh no.

PRESENT MIC: Oh YES! Here's the deal, listeners – you're gonna pick up your phones and call us in! One of my *lovely* friends in the control room –

CANARY: That makes it s-sound like we're in at a r-rocket launch.

PRESENT MIC: Well WHO KNOWS with your Quirk.

CANARY: …Yeah true.

PRESENT MIC: We're just going to leave that there and confuse you all. You'll find out what his Quirk *really* is at the Sports Festival.

CANARY: I'm terrified.

PRESENT MIC: You'll be *fine*.

CANARY: Well, everyone knows my Quirk's to do with singing. So, what if it doesn't quite work for some reason? I could be standing in the middle of the arena – singing – and my Quirk doesn't activate and I'll just look like an idiot!

PRESENT MIC: Don't be so pessimistic!

CANARY: I-I would say that was me being o-optimistic enough to assume I e-even make it to the tournament round.

PRESENT MIC: OK WE'RE GOING TO GO TO THE CALLER before Canary digs himself into a pessimistic pit.

CANARY: A what?

PRESENT MIC: OK – the number to call *is five-five-five-o-one hundred!*

(Author's note – this is the legendary fake number and I haven't checked it – pretty sure it's still fictional. And no, I don't care if it doesn't match up to any Japanese regions and isn't a complete number. Musutafu is a fake My Hero Academia place – a name taken from Star Wars – of course it doesn't have an official area code. The other number eventually mention is also fake. I just didn't want to write XXX-XXXX because I thought it was weird. Sorry – please do carry on)

CANARY: That w-was very fast.

PRESENT MIC: You say it then!

CANARY: Five-five-five-o-one hundred

PRESENT MIC: Fiv-fiv-fivey-o-one hundred

A brief moment of silence follows

CANARY: …What?

PRESENT MIC: CUE THE RING TONE!

The ring tone dial is heard

CANARY: But wait, if *they're* calling *us*, why is there a ring tone?

PRESENT MIC: DON'T QUESTION MY LOGIC!

LISTENER: Um, hello?

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH – *you*, little listener – have made it *all* the way to Put Your Hands Up Radio!

LISTENER: Yay! Oh, my goshness – so cool!

PRESENT MIC: SAY HI, CANARY!

CANARY: U-Um… hi?

A faint squeal is heard

LISTENER: HI! I'm Kunie!

PRESENT MIC: NICE TO MEET YA, KUNIE! Where are you, in this *exact* moment?

LISTENER {KUNIE}: Oh, I'm on the train – going to my friend's house.

PRESENT MIC: That explains the rumbling noise! *Anyway*, do you have a question for us, Kunie?

LISTENER {KUNIE}: Sure! Um, hi again, Canary!

CANARY: Hi…

LISTENER {KUNIE}: I was wondering – if you're aiming to be a hero, what *kind* of hero do you want to be in particular?

PRESENT MIC: Oh, that's a good question!

LISTENER {KUNIE}: Thank you! So, like, underground or rescue

or…? I mean, I'm aiming for rescue myself and I *totally* wouldn't mind having a sweet little birb like you as a co-worker!

PRESENT MIC: Aw – WHAT DO YOU SAY, BIRB?

CANARY: Ha, ha – um, well – I don't really know? I guess it depends on how I use my Quirk… Um, I'm not sure if underground would work out too well – I think it might be difficult sneaking up on someone whilst s-singing…

LISTENER {KUNIE}: Oh yeah, that's a good point!

CANARY: B-Bearing in mind I-I'm not actually on t-the hero course.

PRESENT MIC: YET.

CANARY: Y-Yeah…

PRESENT MIC: Anyway – a BIG thanks to Kunie for phoning in!

LISTENER {KUNIE}: Oh my gosh – seriously, thank you *so* much for having me!

PRESENT MIC: You have a song suggestion for us while we're here?!

LISTENER {KUNIE}: Err… Rocket Man by Elton John!

CANARY: T-That was because of earlier, wasn't it?

LISTENER {KUNIE}: YEP! Oh, and before I go – I'm sure you'll do really well in the Sports Festival; I'll be rooting for you!

CANARY: T-Thank you.

PRESENT MIC: BYE, KUNIE!

LISTENER {KUNIE}: Bye!

CANARY: G-Goodbye…

PRESENT MIC: *But* before we play that wonderful suggestion – WE HAVE ANOTHER NUMBER TO READ OUT!

CANARY: O-Oh yeah!

PRESENT MIC: Our *hero hotline* is a wonderful number that *you* can call if you need help! Of course, the *real* emergency number is

obviously the priority, but if your problem is a bit more of a delicate situation – ring us up, and we'll help you out the best we can! Even if it's not an immediate emergency, or you're having some tricky mental health dilemmas, we'll do the best we can to give you the support you need! And CANARY is here with the number…

CANARY: O-Oh – um, it's five-five-five-o-one-one-nine.

PRESENT MIC: Did you just say that from memory?

CANARY: …Maybe.

PRESENT MIC: THAT WAS five-five-five-zero-one-one-nine! And with that – TO THE ROCKET SHIP!

Before long, the radio show had come to an end, and with the final song put on for all to hear, Midoriya took off his headphones, wandered out of the studio, and collapsed onto his newly claimed armchair in a heap.

Present Mic laughed as he exited after him, turning off the lights inside the studio as he went. This was Present Mic's private place. After his shows were over for the night, his other co-workers on the floor below them would take over for late night broadcasts. Present Mic was a hero, a radio presenter *and* a teacher. He knew how to manage his time to ensure that everything got done, but, consequently, some things were sacrificed. One of those being *not* hosting Put Your Hands Up Radio twenty-four-seven.

"Someone's a little tired," Aozora laughed. She was doing paperwork on one of the sofas near Midoriya whilst Nakano continued to manage the logistics of the end of the show, likely passing controls over to the news station.

"I-It's just been a long time since I've done so much *talking*," Midoriya admitted, feeling his throat gingerly. It hadn't been so bad the Thursday before, but all this radio show business was really starting to get to his poorly used voice box.

"THEN I HAVE JUST THE THING FOR YOU!" Present Mic cried. He disappeared as Midoriya cautiously removed his hands from his ears

once more, only for him to return, moments later, at an equally high volume. “HERE YOU GO, CANARY!” He thrown a small bag into Midoriya’s lap.

Frowning, Midoriya carefully undid the draw string and looked inside. “Throat lozenges?”

“Not just *any* throat lozenges. Ones that actually *taste nice.”*

Aozora pulled a mockingly shocked face. “Honestly though, they’re amazing. They work *super* well.”

“Aozora, why are you here?” Midoriya questioned as he unravelled one of the lozenges. “I thought you had your own office?”

“Yeah, but you’re here – and I wanted to see you.”

Midoriya couldn’t supress his smile as he put the lozenge in his mouth. Present Mic was right – they actually *did* taste nice.

“You can keep that bag, if you want,” he offered. “I have *many.”*

“For medicinal uses only – not just because you eat them like sweets,” Nakano insisted as he finished up his work.

“Yes, of course,” Present Mic nodded, waving off the comment.

Midoriya smiled as he packed his various things away, checking his pocket for his orange key card.

“Thank you all for everything,” he said for the one hundredth time as he almost skipped towards the elevator.

“Bye, bye, Canary!” Aozora called out as the elevator doors closed, “And if you say thank you one more time I *swear* I will –”

She didn’t get to finish that sentence, and Midoriya’s mind was left to comedically finish it as he wandered home. He left via the front door, as no one seemed to be outside to see him go, and practically ran all the way to the train station, eager to get home to his mother’s cooking.

She had promised Katsudon.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed this slice-of-life-filler-chapter – it probably won't be the only one unless everyone hates it.

Thanks to **WyvernSpirit** for the character Kunie and their question – as well as **Drakeneo**, **Lilnome** and finally **ViviCatLover** for the character White_Wave! To everyone else who sent me questions, don't worry, I still have them stored in my list. The ones I chose today I chose for several reasons. One, I chose Kunie because that meant I didn't have to make up a name – I'm lazy – and I chose the others LITERALLY due to a random number generator – I kid you not. I couldn't make up my mind so that's what I defaulted to. It's a lottery in this fic. But I am a *mean* lottery – I probably won't use questions from those four again to give others a chance. I am the author – I have the power. MWAHAHAHAHAH

Songs used in this chapter:

Rocket Man – Elton John

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtVBCG6ThDk

I haven't put this on the Canary playlist because he didn't actually sing it – I just mentioned it. And don't ask me what his power would be – I can already see the fifty comments repeating that question over and over again. It's probably like, I don't know – I imagine rockets from his feet. Or maybe even moon-like gravity, yeah probably that, I think that fits the whole tempo and mood of the song more. But he won't be singing this song. Why? Because I've already made up my mind with most of the music.

EXCEPT, well, I need a sleeping song. At the moment I have Lullaby by Paloma Faith, because it's nice and I like how it's upbeat – however, it takes a little longer to get to the chorus than I would like and giving it a sleeping power is also kind of stretching the meaning of the song. But unless you guys can find me a better one, I will just roll with it. WATCH ME.

You can tell by my tone of writing (if that makes sense) that I've been doing this all day none stop and it's *seriously* getting to my head. It's unhealthy. Letters float before my eyes. I have yet to see the light of day – it's one thirty in the afternoon. I am going *insane*.

On the plus side – I am a master touch-typer so I *could* do it with my eyes closed (it's one of my only skills in life).

Oh, and someone give me a Quirk name HELP.

Don’t Be Afraid to Sing Along to the Rhythm of Your Heart

Chapter Notes

SO – because, as we all know, I’m really bad at making decisions – I’ve decided to throw this one at all of you again! Basically, I couldn’t come up with a name for Canary’s Quirk, so I asked my wonderful comment section, and then I got loads of good ideas and now I can’t choose between them. AND SO, as per tradition – I have turned to yet another POLL:

https://linkto.run/p/P7L9QI1W

This story has really turned into a reader participation thing and you know what? I kind of like it! (If you hate it, tell me off and I’ll stop) Speaking of participation – RADIO QUESTIONS! thROW tHEm aT ME!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya was acting a little… *off* recently. At least, that’s what Shinso was thinking at lunch time that Wednesday.

For one – he had been listening to a lot of music.

Midoriya had never really struck Shinso as much of a music lover. Although the fact was true that they hadn’t known each other for very long, Shinso couldn’t help but feel that it was odd that Midoriya was so entranced by whatever he was listening to. In gaps between lessons, he would listen to music, staring at the wall blankly, and then suddenly pull out a notebook titled *Quirk Analysis*, before turning to a new page and frantically writing in it, all the while his headphones were still firmly glued to his ears.

Secondly, he started talking a lot more. Sure, this was a good thing, but Shinso wasn’t too sure how he felt about it. It wasn’t that he didn’t *want* Midoriya to talk – quite the opposite actually. It was just that

Shinso hadn't expected him to open up so quickly over the span of only a few days. He still refused to utter a word to anyone who wasn't named Shinso, Uraraka, Iida, or, weirdly enough, Present Mic. But the stutter was starting to fade from his voice – he no longer felt the need to hesitate before speaking and was gradually increasing in volume. But no – Shinso shouldn't have been including this factor in his mental list. This was probably the best thing that had happened to Midoriya in a while – and Shinso wasn't about to question it.

The third weird thing happened that lunch time.

Uraraka and Iida didn't always sit with Midoriya and Shinso, so it wasn't that strange that the two of them were sitting by themselves. It was near to the end of lunch – which was the best time to go there, because there were normally more spaces free and less social interaction was therefore required. However, this was not the case today. For some reason, a lot of the hall was still full when Midoriya and Shinso arrived. Consequently, they had to sit closer to the middle of the hall.

Time went on and the awkward second years they had been forced to sit next to left, leaving Midoriya to sigh audibly in relief as he gave up tucking his elbows in. That didn't last long, however, because the queue for food was still long and there were few other spaces that sat a relatively large group. That meant that the rest of their table was the perfect place for someone else to claim.

"I found a table!" yelled an overly enthusiastic blond, who didn't even bother checking if it would be ok with the general study students as he plonked his tray down – not on the other side, like a normal person would, but instead *right next to Shinso*.

"Hey, sorry for barging in," apologised a redhead as he slid his tray next to the blond's.

"Doesn't matter," grumbled Shinso. "We're almost finished anyway.

That was when things started to become well… *suspicious*.

Moments after Shinso's mood got even worse, due to the fact that he had just recognised this group of friends as students from class 1-A, i.e. the hero course he was supposed to be in, a girl with bright pink skin skipped over to the table, put her food down beside Midoriya, and sat down.

She waved at Shinso's shy friend – and then did a double take.

"*Hey!*" she grinned, giving Midoriya finger guns, "Well if it isn't –"

He gave her a wide-eyed look, his noodles suspended halfway to his mouth.

The pink girl hesitated, as if she had just remembered something. She clapped her hands, and continued, "– Uraraka's friend! Hi!"

Midoriya, who looked like he was about to spontaneously combust, gave her a feeble wave in return and turned back to his food.

"The… mute friend?" frowned another guy with rather large elbows as he sat down beside Pink.

They started muttering about how rude that was when the redhead stood up and waved to whoever was the last to join their group, "Hey, Bakugo! Over here!"

Shinso didn't fail to notice the way Midoriya flinched. He immediately put his chopsticks down, not even signing a word to Shinso, as he stood up to put his tray away.

"Hey, where are you going?" Shinso frowned.

Midoriya didn't even acknowledge him as he turned around. The hero students seemed a little confused too.

That was when Midoriya came face to face with a spiky haired blond with deep red eyes.

Shinso recognised him – it was that guy with the explosive hero costume from the week before, who Midoriya literally shrunk away from as he passed by.

"Get out of my way, Deku," snarled the hero student.

Midoriya sidestepped instantly, his head down as he weaved as quickly as possible through the crowd with his tray. It wasn't long before he was out of sight.

Shinso stared at him. Yeah, there was *definitely* a story there.

"Deku?" repeated Shinso.

'Bakugo' glared at him as if he couldn't believe some low life from general studies was even talking to him. He didn't say a word in reply.

Shinso got to his feet and marched to the other side of the table, where Bakugo had sat down opposite the redhead. “Why did my friend just abandon his food and run off at the mention of your name?”

“How am I supposed to know?” sneered Bakugo, who was rather focused on adding as much chilli to his food as humanly possible.

“I don’t know,” frowned the redhead, “he seemed rather freaked out by you, man. You know each other or something?”

Shinso had never seen someone close a bottle of sauce with such menace.

“He’s a Quirkless wimp I knew from middle school who likes to turn tail and run from everyone and everything. Anything else you’d like to know or can I eat my damned food in peace?” Bakugo snapped.

It took a moment for things to click into place in Shinso’s mind.

He knew him in middle school.

He called him names – called him *Quirkless*.

And Midoriya flinched around him like he was expecting he’d hit him.

Shinso had never been so tempted to brainwash someone to drown in their hot sauce. But that would have to wait for another time. Right now, Midoriya took priority.

So, with a mental vendetta set, Shinso grabbed his tray and joined the queue to tidy it away, before running through the halls after his friend.

When he first checked class 1-C, he was nowhere to be found, but by the time Shinso had returned for afternoon registration, so had Midoriya. He was sitting at his desk, headphones on, jotting notes in his Quirk Analysis book like nothing had happened at all.

Shinso tapped on the side of Midoriya’s desk to try to get his attention. That didn’t work – probably because the volume of his music was so loud that Shinso could almost hear it. So, he was forced to get out of his seat, tap Midoriya on his shoulder, and sit back down again so he could participate in a conversation.

[*What happened back there?*] Shinso questioned.

Midoriya blinked at him, like he wasn't quite sure what he was talking about. [*Nothing*] was all he signed in reply.

[*It wasn't nothing. You jumped up like you'd had an electric shock and almost ran away from that guy]*

Midoriya just shrugged.

Shinso would have pressed for more information, but Present Mic had just started the register, and Shinso wasn't too sure how much of this Midoriya would want his teacher knowing. Shinso kept forgetting they weren't the only ones in the school who knew sign language.

The rest of the day continued as normal – much unlike the Wednesday the week before, which was rather disjointed thanks to the attack at the USJ. But as soon as the final lesson came to a close, Shinso grabbed Midoriya backpack, stopping him from leaving.

Catching the gist of the scenario. Midoriya sat back down and waited glumly, headphones handing around his neck, as the two of them waited for the rest of the class to leave. Unfortunately, things didn't quite work out that way, because the all mighty President Ohchi watched them like a hawk, and refused to leave until they did, ushering them out of the classroom.

Shinso grudgingly gave back Midoriya's backpack as they met Uraraka and Iida by the front gates.

"U-Um…" stammered Midoriya just before they started walking, "S-Shinso and I h-have a project due tomorrow?" he lied blatantly. Shinso tried to keep the shock out of his expression. "S-So, we're going to stay b-behind today for a while – you two c-can go on without u-us." His stutter was back – showing how nervous he seemed.

"Oh, that's ok!" Uraraka smiled. "You've been awfully busy recently, haven't you?" she acknowledged. "You seem to stay behind at school a lot."

"A diligent response to the amount of work our general study peers receive!" Iida exclaimed. "No matter – we will see the two of you tomorrow!"

So, the only sane hero students Shinso had encountered so far, left them be.

Shinso turned to Midoriya, only to see that he had already started

walking away – not back to the main campus, but down a path to the side of it.

Frowning, he trailed his green-haired friend as he walked in silence. Eventually, they reached the sports hall that their class often used. Shinso was rather surprised when Midoriya walked right up to it and pulled open the door. He wasn't sure if they were allowed in there, but he didn't question it, and followed Midoriya inside.

When Shinso turned back around, after closing the door, he saw Midoriya on the floor, pulling out the contents of his bag. He just stared at him as he shuffled around for a while, flipping through his various notebooks; messing with what seemed to be a portable speaker; fiddling with his phone.

Shinso sat down in front of him, crossing his legs and tossing his own bag aside. "Midoriya," he started.

His friend looked up, before immediately averting his gaze.

"Midoriya, what's going on with you?" Shinso frowned. He let the questions spill out of his mouth. Usually, he was quiet – patient. He held back for his shy friend, but he just couldn't take it any longer. "What happened with that guy at lunch? He said he knew you from middle school – and you… you ran away from him like you were scared he'd set you on *fire*."

He was kidding – obviously. But then he doubted himself, remembering Bakugo's explosion themed hero costume.

"…Did he bully you, Midoriya?"

He still wouldn't look at him, twiddling his thumbs and refusing to raise his head. Shinso had the sinking feeling he was right.

He was quieter than a mouse when he spoke, "W-We live in the same neighbourhood. We used to go on p-playdates together when we were little – went to the same nursery; same kindergarten; same middle school… Everywhere we go, we're always t-together. This is the first time that we're not in the same class… He was my first f-friend – my only friend."

"Some friend."

There was a slight smile across Midoriya's face now – but it was a sad one. "I was there when he manifested his Quirk… He was there when

I… when I didn't manifest mine."

A friendship turned sour – a kid who thought he was the best. Better than Midoriya, his childhood friend – the *Quirkless wimp*. Deku.

"He… He called you something," Shinso frowned, recalling the nickname.

Midoriya gave a small chuff of laughter. Again, there was no happiness within it. "Deku – it's a different way of p-pronouncing the kanji of my first name… It's supposed to mean useless."

"You aren't useless, Midoriya," Shinso shot back at him. "You're as far from useless as you can get."

His smile didn't change. It was like he didn't believe him. "Thanks," he murmured anyway.

They sat there in silence for a moment.

Shinso considered messaging his parents – he could be there for a while. As long as it would take; he didn't want to leave Midoriya like this.

"He told me to jump off a roof once," said Midoriya.

Shinso snapped his head up, his breath hitching.

Midoriya just picked at the concrete below him. "Said that if I wanted a Quirk so badly, that I should see if I get one in my next life… take a swan dive off the roof of the building."

"You didn't seriously –"

"Consider it?"

His voice had grown a little louder now. Midoriya finally met Shinso's eyes. He stayed like that for a moment, mulling the question over in his mind before speaking once more. "No… but I did wonder – if anyone would miss me, I suppose. I knew he'd regret saying it – knew it would pull his hero plans out from under his feet if I decided to…" he gulped. "But I didn't. Of course, I didn't. Kacchan will make a great hero; I know he will."

Shinso hesitated, not sure what to say, "Kacchan?" was what came out of his mouth.

Another laugh, “My nickname for him. I’m Deku and he’s Kacchan.”

“You mean you just decided to call him a cutesy name and he settled with *useless?”*

Midoriya shrugged, “I suppose.”

Screw hot sauce. Shinso was already plotting a more painful death for Bakugo.

“People would miss you if you were gone,” Shinso added, realising he should have said that a little earlier.

Midoriya didn’t reply. It hurt Shinso more than any words could have. But then he added, “I guess it’s a different story now.”

Shinso wasn’t sure what else to say. He knew Midoriya’s past must have been bad if it left him mute, but for some reason, he’d never expected this.

“Shinso, I’m not Quirkless.”

Ok… *what?*

“What do you mean, you’re not Quirkless?” said Shinso, furrowing his bow. Where the hell did this come from?

“I-I didn’t lie to you,” he stammered. “I didn’t lie to anyone!”

“I never said you were lying,” Shinso interjected, raising his hands to calm him down. “I just… that was the last thing I expected you to say – you’re *not Quirkless?”*

“Y-You know that girl from lunch?” he continued.

Shinso could *not* see where this was going, but he nodded unsurely anyway.

“T-That’s Mina," continued Midoriya. "S-She joined my… my *dance* class recently.”

Ok, this was just getting weirder and *weirder*. “Your… dance class…” repeated Shinso.

Midoriya flushed red and ducked his head again.

“You dance?” Shinso blinked. “No, no – I’m not insulting you! I just didn’t expect it. *Wow*, you are full of surprises today…”

He laughed again – a real laugh this time. It was small and quiet – but it was real; not pitiful or sad. “I-I really like music and dance… I always have. I didn’t know w-why – I just… It was something different. Everyone there was in the same place as I w-was; no one made fun of me or pressured me to speak…”

“So, she saw you dance and that’s how she recognised you?”

Midoriya nodded, but then shook his head. “Not this time – I didn’t dance I…” he twiddled his thumbs again, looking up at Shinso nervously, “I played the guitar?”

Right.

Shinso just nodded repeatably. “Ok – again, unexpected – but cool. *I* can’t play the guitar. I’d probably, I don’t know, *break* it.”

Midoriya’s smile grew wider, “I did break it.”

“You… broke your guitar?”

“W-Well, kind of. It’s a little burnt now.”

Shinso narrowed his eyes, “You set fire to your *guitar?”*

“N-No, no!” Midoriya stuttered, before wavering and adding, “Well, yes – accidently.”

“And this is during *dance class?”*

“Oh, no, this was before d-dance class – about… yeah, just over a week ago now? I um… well, I didn’t set fire to my *guitar* – I set fire to the *rain.”*

Shinso couldn’t help but smile at how ridiculous that sounded. “You set fire to the *rain?”*

Midoriya laughed again, a lot louder this time. He was getting more confident with his confusing story telling. “Like in the song!”

“You mean like the song – set fire to the rain?”

“Yeah!”

“I’m sorry, but you’ve lost me.”

“I-It’s my Quirk.”

“Your Quirk is setting fire to the rain?”

“No! The *music* is!”

“The *music* set fire to the –”

“Oh, you know what I mean!” Midoriya exclaimed.

“I *really* don’t,” Shinso replied, laughing through the confusion of it all.

“Here, look,” Midoriya continued. He opened his phone, tapped a few things, and slid it across the floor towards him.

Shinso picked up it. He saw a music playlist and narrowed his eyes again, glancing between Midoriya and his phone in bewilderment.

“Don’t bother plugging it into the speaker,” instructed Midoriya. “But just… choose a song – any of them. I don’t mind which.”

Patience. Have patience with Midoriya – good things come with time.

And so, Shinso sighed, and scrolled through the playlist, struggling to figure out what the songs had in common. They were karaoke versions, he noticed – some covers; some not. What caught his eye the most though, was Midoriya’s title of the playlist:

Arsenal.

Yeah, not at all worrying.

He hesitated at one of the songs he recognised. Looking up at Midoriya – who seemed a little terrified, Shinso tapped on the song and set his phone down before him, turning up the volume to its highest setting and waiting to see what Midoriya would do.

~Titanium – David Guetta / Sia~

As the music began, Shinso watched as Midoriya crossed his legs, reaching an almost meditative pose, and closed his eyes. And then, after taking a final peak at Shinso through one eye, a wobbly smile grew across his face – and he opened his mouth, and he *sang*.

"You shouted out. But I can't hear a word you say…"

Momentarily forgetting Midoriya's confusing story revolving suicide, dancing, guitar-playing and setting fire to the rain, Shinso's jaw dropped as his selectively mute friend sang to him. And his voice was *beautiful*.

"*I'm criticised, but all your bullets ricochet…"*

He opened his eyes again – just enough to see Shinso's shocked expression; his smile grew a little wider, before he closed his eyes tightly once more, like he was scared of opening them. But still, that smile continued to light up the room as his voice echoed around it.

To think – all this time – the world had been missing out on such a voice, because of the harshness it had been succumbed to. The very thought made Shinso's blood boil – but now was not the time for anger. Right now, his brain was still trying to figure out what the heck was going on.

Why was he singing? Sure, it was incredible – but *why?* He mentioned setting fire to the rain – and then the song – the song setting fire to his guitar? No… the *rain* setting fire to his guitar… Wait – the *music* did it – that's what he said, right? So then… if Set Fire to the Rain – set the rain alight…

"*You shoot me down, but I won't fall. I am titanium!"*

And Shinso's eyes grew even wider as the skin beneath Midoriya's uniform became rigid – as the texture crept up to his neckline and down his arms – only to reveal it was turning *silver*. Like he was being coated in a metallic substance that dripped over every inch of his body. And he opened his eyes once more, and they too, where made of *titanium*.

"*I am titanium…"*

Shinso pushed himself backwards as this silver Midoriya reached forward to turn off his phone. But of course, his metal skin couldn't work the device. So, Shinso braved himself to take it off him and turn it off himself.

Midoriya's grin wavered. He had stopped singing now – they were sitting in silence.

"I'm sorry…" he whispered.

Slowly but surely, the metal was creeping away from him in the same way it had appeared, like wax melting from a candle.

It took a moment for Shinso to get himself together. "Holy *shoot,*" was what he managed.

Midoriya blinked at him as the last of the metal faded.

"That… that's your *Quirk?!"* Shinso gaped.

Midoriya scratched the back of his neck sheepishly. "…Yeah. I, um, haven't figured out what to call it yet…"

"Y-You…" Shinso looked back and forth from Midoriya and his phone again. Suddenly, the title *arsenal* made a lot more sense. "Your singing does *that?!"*

"Can you imagine my surprise when Set Fire to the Rain *actually* set fire to the rain?" Midoriya grinned.

Shinso jumped to his feet, "You have a *QUIRK!"*

"I KNOW!" Midoriya leapt up too, punching the air excitably, before faltering and turning back to Shinso, "Y-You're not freaked out?"

"Freaked *out?"* Shinso repeated, "Yeah, just a little! But only because that was the most… stupid *awesome* thing I've seen a Quirk do since I made – actually, we're not going to talk about that – Midoriya, this is *incredible."*

"You r-really think so?"

"Err, *yeah?* Are you kidding me?"

"B-Because um, well, there's *one* more thing I need to tell you," said Midoriya, tensing up his shoulders in the way that he did when he was scared what someone might think or say.

"…What did you do?"

"It wasn't me!" Midoriya replied quickly. "I-It was Present Mic."

“Right…”

“He… He found me practising here last week and um… well, did you hear about Canary?”

Shinso frowned – he’d heard the name being flung around but wasn’t too sure about it. “Is that a new hero?”

Midoriya blushed for some reason, “A-Ah, no – no, actually, it’s me.”

“You’re *Canary?”* Shinso questioned. “What do you mean?”

“Um, well, Present Mic convinced me that, err, to improve my confidence – I could go on his radio show? But I didn’t want anyone to know who I was – so, um… Canary’s my… codename?”

Shinso smiled, “Your *hero name.”*

Midoriya flushed even redder, waving his arms about as he spoke, “N-No! I-I mean… not *yet.*”

And the puzzle pieces connected together.

“Let me get this straight,” grinned Shinso. “You’re building up your confidence on the radio so you can sing in front of a crowd at the Sports Festival and get into the hero course?”

Midoriya hesitated, “…*Maybe?”*

“Well, you know there are *two* spaces open in class 1-A,” Shinso acknowledged.

He didn’t need to say anymore.

Midoriya flung himself at Shinso in a grateful hug.

Shinso hugged him back, grinning, “The hero course isn’t going to know what hit it.”

Chapter End Notes

I have more fanart! YAYAYAYAYYAYAYAYA

https://66.media.tumblr.com/7ab4ea7c5297e01aad7871a5407edfdb/tumblr_pvcs0jBWWA1y00t3io1_1280.jpg

Thank you Toughtfullybeautifulwitch! :)
They asked me a while back for a brief description of what Canary's hero costume might look like, and this is the masterpiece that they came up with!
I have ALSO drawn my own little concept art thing for this story because I didn't think anyone would bother drawing something so I did it myself. He's not in his hero costume here – only part of it. Don't click on either of these art links if you don't want ANY spoilers for the future, but it's not much – only a look at an important item of clothing and the legendary birb that is Siren :)

https://cloud-nine-and-three-quarters.tumblr.com/image/186121084028

Oh, and sorry if I couldn't reply to your comment on last chapter. I got A LOT – which is really exciting and rather daunting, so, yeah, thank you! I read every single one of them – so even if I didn't reply, I still read it and REALLY appreciated you commenting and reading! (The same might go for this chapter if I predict the comment traffic correctly)
AND ONE LAST THING!
I am going on HOLIDAY and it is a LLLOOOONNNGGG trip over there. This means there is a possibility that I might be late for my next upload – but due to the fates and fortunes above, I have been granted the perfection that is my several days trip being BETWEEN upload dates, so, yeah – it might be done, might not – please don't kill me if it isn't. See you then, and thank you for putting up with my rambling and writing XD

Songs used in this chapter:
Titanium - David Guetta / Sia - Covered by Gavin Beach / Jamie Cleaton
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjwqQI3PZhE

How It All Came Together

Chapter Notes

Hello everybody! Sorry, I know I'm a day late for the upload. I wrote this entire chapter in one day, so sorry if there are any mistakes – and honestly, I don't know how I did it for Displacement – that was my first story, and I wrote one chapter per day and uploaded in the mornings. How? Why? I don't know. Four-day gaps are far easier to manage. Anyway, if you didn't read last chapter's notes, I've been travelling, so I wasn't able to write and/or upload – but I'm here now! Yay! I shall return to the four-day schedule until I start travelling again to return home. I will remind you when that's happening.

I'm also happy to announce that the name of Canary's Quirk will be **Living Melody** – which received 28.7% of the votes. I know that doesn't sound like much, but it was pretty close! This was submitted by I hate your username *so much* yeet_all_the_thots *ughhhhhh* why must you make me write that? so, thank you! And to everyone who voted as well! I can't take down the poll. So… I guess it's just there forever now! But I really like that Quirk name, it was one of my favourites from the list, so, even if one of the other names overtakes this one, I will be sticking with Living Melody. But thank you to everyone who submitted names and who voted!

SPEAKING of polls, the *Should Canary Get One for All?* poll is very adamant that he will NOT be getting the Quirk, with 60.6% in favour (662 people have voted at this point, so *wow*). Again, I can't take the poll down. Want to change my mind? Vote HERE!

And DID SOMEONE RECOMMEND MY LAST STORY???? The Mystery of Student no.18??? Because there are suddenly new comments on it and more bookmarks/kudos. What happened? W-What? If I was recommended somewhere, do point me in their direction so I can shower them with gratitude (no, not flaming rain)! If not, thank you! :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya wasn't usually one to feel much pride about himself – but yesterday had been the exception. He actually *sang* to someone.

Present Mic didn't count – he always walked in part way through the song, so Midoriya didn't have to muster the courage to begin; all he had to do is not stop. With Shinso, it had been different – but Shinso, of all people, deserved it. For it was only because of him that Midoriya had been able to muster the courage to begin singing at all – only because of him that he found his Quirk.

Now, Midoriya had been thinking a lot about this, mainly because that was all he ever did – but why had he only discovered his Quirk *now?* It must have manifested when he was younger, like everyone else, but he never came across the right conditions for it to present itself. Then there was the extra joint in his little toe – convincing him that there was no point in searching for a Quirk anyway. His ability was a freak mutation. Perhaps he did inherit Quirklessness from his parents, but a separate mutation resulted in a brand-new Quirk – stronger than any normally inherited powers. If finding that power was as simple as singing a song – why hadn't he found it before? Surely everyone sings something at some point in their lives, including Midoriya.

That thought was what lead him to the discovery of another aspect of his Quirk; he called it: Euphoria Songs.

[*As in, happiness songs?*] questioned Shinso that Thursday afternoon as the two of them packed away their things at the end of the day, granted, that task took an awful lot longer than usual if they were trying to sign at the same time.

[*Yeah! A song which gives me a weak ability – one that only makes other people happy! Or, I suppose I could include songs which grant any other type of emotion – but I feel like happiness is the most common*] Midoriya explained.

[*So, you think you never found your Quirk before because the only songs you've ever sang only grant a happiness power?*]

[*I think it's most likely… Like, Happy Birthday, for instance! Or, nearly any Christmas song*]

[*Or if you sang, for example, Let it Snow, when it's already snowing*]

[*Exactly! I'd have no idea my singing had anything to do with it – or other song abilities could be narrowed down to coincidences – or maybe I just didn't sing enough of some songs to activate my Quirk*]

Shinso smiled, pausing his signing so he could finish packing his bag. Slinging it over his shoulder, he said, [*I can't believe you have a Quirk*]

[*Me neither!*] Midoriya signed in reply, bouncing to his feet as he also finished packing.

[*And the radio station thing too*] continued Shinso as they walked out of class 1-C, [*I went and listened to all your shows. You've got a bit of a fanbase going on, you know that, right?*]

Midoriya sighed audibly, [*I know. We made a social media account for Canary last Tuesday and I already have so many followers… it's crazy…*]

Shinso huffed, "The Sports Festival's going to be interesting, that's for sure."

Midoriya nodded frantically, unsure whether that was a good thing or a bad thing.

"Why's it going to be interesting?" It was Uraraka, who had just joined the duo, alongside Iida, on their way down to the exit of the school.

"You'll see," was all Shinso said in reply.

As Uraraka tried desperately to convince Shinso to tell her what he meant, Midoriya's thoughts returned to the radio show. It was Thursday, so he was due at the station soon – but he still had homework to do. If he arrived a little earlier than usual, perhaps he could do it in the waiting room whilst…

He froze.

"Is something wrong, Midoriya?" questioned Iida, frowning and looking back as Midoriya desperately thrust his hands into all the various pockets of his clothing.

"Have you lost something?" guessed Uraraka. Midoriya had pulled his bag off at this point, tipping out its contents in a distressed bid to locate it.

Failing at that, and putting his things away once more, Midoriya leapt to his feet and signed to Shinso, [*My key card – it's gone!*]

"Your…" he glanced at the hero students, [*What key card?*]

[*The one for the radio station! I can't get in without it!*]

Shinso sighed, "He's lost the key card for his flat," he lied. "You guys go on ahead – I'll help him find it."

Not questioning the oddity of having a *key card* for a flat rather than an ordinary key, Uraraka and Iida immediately suggested that they should help too.

“It’s fine,” insisted Shinso, “You’ll miss your trains. Anyway, I’ve been with Midoriya all day – it can’t have gone far. See you tomorrow.”

They weren’t too keen to leave, but after registering the obvious dismissal by Shinso, the hero students waved goodbye and good luck in finding the card as they left the premises.

“Ok, did you take it out at school at any point?” Shinso interrogated as soon as they were gone.

Midoriya shook his head in a panic.

“Why did you even bring it to school?!”

[*Because I wasn’t sure if I wanted to stay behind and practise my Quirk – and then go straight to the radio station! But then we got all that maths homework and so I decided that maybe it would have been best to –*]

“Ok, stop,” Shinso interrupted. Midoriya’s hand movements had become so erratic that Shinso probably couldn’t understand them anymore. “Let’s just retrace our steps. It must have fallen out of your pocket at some point today. What does it look like?”

[*Orange – with the name Canary written on it*]

“Oh, of course it does,” Shinso sighed.

Midoriya’s eyes widened at the conclusion. If anyone *found* the card – they’d see the radio station logo, and then the name Canary. If Midoriya went up to them, asking for it back – then they’d know that he was Canary…

“Come on, let’s try and find it before someone else does,” Shinso insisted.

And so, with Iida not around to tell them off, they took off at a run up the corridors back to class 1-C. They scoured every inch of the classroom, but it was nowhere to be seen. Then the length of the hallways down to the lunch hall – not there either – not even the lunch hall itself gave any relief to their problem.

But whilst Midoriya was seconds away from a panic attack, Shinso

was far less worried. [*You said you have Cockatoo's number. Just tell him that you lost it and I'm sure he'll let you in. They'll get you a new one*]

Eventually, Midoriya gave in and nodded. They walked back down from class 1-C, after checking it for a third time, about to leave the school when –

"No, *look* – it belongs to *Canary!"*

Midoriya and Shinso froze.

Just behind them, standing outside the doorway to class 1-B, a group of students crowded around a short girl with a block fringe so long that it rivalled what Kisho's used to look like. He'd cut it much shorter now, so it looked worse – Shinso and Midoriya still called him fringe in sign language anyway.

Fringe 2.0 was rather short, so she held up what was in her hand high into the air for her other classmates to see – a bright orange key card.

Shinso swore quietly. He grasped Midoriya's arm and pulled him over to the group, whilst Midoriya struggled to get away in fear that Shinso would expose him.

"Hey, what's that?" Shinso questioned, wearing one of the best poker faces Midoriya had ever seen.

"It's *Canary's*," Fringe 2.0 explained excitably.

"Who?" Shinso frowned. Midoriya was staring at him in awe – he was *very* good at this acting shtick.

"From the radio show?" scoffed one of the other girls. "Seriously, have you been living under a rock or something?"

Shinso rolled his eyes at her, "Well, whoever he is – I'm sure he'll want that back. Why don't you go give it to Principal Nedzu or something?"

"Well, you two clearly don't know who Canary is, so, *allow me* to explain. He's a guy in our year or the one above and he's becoming *uber*-famous. He has a secret identity – so, whoever comes and asks for this card back must be Canary and –"

"Aren't you supposed to be hero students?" Shinso snapped.

There was a bit of a crowd forming around them now. It seemed like

quite a few people were interested in who Canary was.

The argument between Shinso and the group of class 1-B girls grew more escalated. Eventually, a girl with bright orange hair in a ponytail came in between them to back with Shinso, suggesting they should take the card to a teacher and leave Canary alone.

Midoriya, meanwhile – had decided that he should suck up the courage and take this matter into his own hands.

He left Shinso's side, unbeknownst to anyone else, and crept around the crowd to the other side, where Fringe 2.0 was standing with the key card.

Shinso caught Midoriya's eye and realised what he was trying to do. So, Shinso lunged forwards in an apparent attempt to take the card.

The girl backed away a little, holding the card behind her back. It was right in Midoriya's face.

Shinso, of course, could have easily used his Quirk on her to force her to hand the card over. But, Midoriya wasn't the only one hesitant to use his Quirk.

So, Midoriya was now in the corner of the crowd, directly behind where Fringe 2.0 had backed up to, away from Shinso. Midoriya was blocked from view of as many members of the crowd as he could hope for. So, as Shinso caught his eye once again, and lunged forward at the girl, Midoriya took that moment of surprise and snatched the card from her hand, thrusting it into his pocket without anyone noticing.

Shinso cried out in fake frustration. "*Fine*, you do you," he hissed. "I seriously can't be bothered to meddle with anymore hero course problems." He looked to his side to see Midoriya there, as if he'd never left. "Come on – let's get out of here," he grumbled, and the two left without another word.

They turned the corner as they heard a frantic shout from behind them, "Hey! Where'd the card go?!"

Midoriya and Shinso exchanged glances struggling to hold back their laughter.

"You did get it, right?" Shinso confirmed, hesitating at the bottom of the stairs.

Midoriya waved the orange card at him, “I am a master pickpocket!”

“That’s not at all worrying.”

They hesitated, turning slowly towards the origin of the voice, just behind them up the stairs.

It was another girl, with deep purple hair and oddly shaped ear lobes – where those AUX cords attached to her skin?

“We’re going to give it to the Principal,” Shinso insisted without missing a beat.

“Sure,” said the girl, raising an eyebrow. “And *you* don’t sound *exactly* like Canary. Trust me, I always remember a voice.”

Midoriya tried desperately to reply, but his voice just got stuck in his throat again. So, he did the next best thing, and lifted his finger to his lips in a bid to keep her quiet.

She smiled, “Don’t worry – I won’t tell anyone, *Canary*.”

They began walking together as Midoriya slipped the card securely into his pocket once more.

“What’s your name?” Shinso questioned after a while.

“Jiro,” she replied. “You?”

“I’m Shinso – this is Midoriya.”

Midoriya gave a feeble wave. He was still a little glum that he had been foolish enough to let the card get out of his sight in the first place – and that it had ended up like this.

“Midoriya?” Jiro frowned, “As in Uraraka’s friend? I thought you were mute?”

“Ok, how many people has Uraraka talked to about Midoriya?” Shinso sighed, voicing Midoriya’s thoughts.

“Hm? Oh, we were just talking about people from other classes and you were brought up in conversation. Then you were all *talking* to each other after the USJ attack – it was something to divert the conversation to rather than think about everything that had just happened,” she explained.

‘*Oh, ok – that’s a little less terrifying,’* thought Midoriya as the three of them left UA.

“So, anyway – you’re on the radio tonight, right?” Jiro asked Midoriya.

He nodded hesitantly.

“Are you gonna sing this time?”

Midoriya blinked at her, furrowing his brow.

“Hey, I’m following you on social media,” Jiro continued. “Have you even read the comments about you? You have like, an entire hashtag, dude. Everyone who’s heard of you wants to know who you are – and if they’re not talking about that, they’re talking about your Quirk.”

Midoriya looked at his feet, kicking at the gravel as they walked.

“Sorry,” Jiro said suddenly. “–about following you guys and seeing the key card. I saw you take it… But, yeah, sorry – I have a hearing Quirk, so I usually end up knowing things people like to keep under wraps.”

They stopped at the crossroads, the one where Shinso parted ways with Midoriya normally. Jiro turned towards the other road, about to leave.

“I’m good at keeping secrets,” she insisted. “But even you can’t keep this hidden forever – the Sports Festival’s just around the corner, and they’ll know who you are by then. So… Yeah – just bear it in mind.”

Midoriya nodded giving her a little bow in thanks rather than saying it out loud.

She nodded in reply as well, before turning and walking away, plugging one of her earphone jacks into her phone instead of having to both with tangled wires.

Shinso bit his lip, thinking hard about something before turning back to Midoriya. “She must be another hero student,” he realised. “Might be our classmate in the future.”

“Yours maybe,” Midoriya mumbled, “I’m not sure about me…”

“You’ll be great in the Sports Festival, Midoriya,” Shinso told him in determination.

“Not if I can’t sing.”

“You sang to me – you were great.”

“T-That was different… I trust you.”

“What do you need to trust me for?” questioned Shinso.

Midoriya stopped fiddling with his fingers, looking up at him in confusion.

“So, you trust me to not tell anyone that you’re an amazing singer with an incredibly powerful Quirk? It’s not as if your secret is a bad thing. And if you’re embarrassed by it – think of me – to get people to talk to me so I can activate my Quirk, I usually have to insult them, so everyone hates me by default,” he laughed sadly.

“I don’t hate you,” Midoriya contradicted quietly.

Shinso sighed and smiled, “My point is, you literally have a fan base – and it’ll be even bigger by tonight – whatever you end up doing it’ll be fine.”

Midoriya gave him a meek smile in return.

It was getting late – they’d killed a lot of time searching for the key card, but if Midoriya hurried, he’d be able to catch the next train back to his house, with enough time to spare to clean up and change, if he wanted to stick to his doing his homework at the radio station idea.

And so, still feeling rather down, Midoriya bid Shinso goodbye and ran the rest of the way to the train station.

He didn’t take his key card to school for a while after that.

Present Mic's Radio Show!

Tuesdays and Thursdays 18:30 – 19:30

Canary's Hour

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH!

CANARY: Y-Yay…

PRESENT MIC: IIIIIITTTT'S six thirty! And we all know what that means…

CANARY: Um, I-I'm here?

PRESENT MIC: CANARY'S HOUR IS UPON US!

CANARY: H-Hi.

PRESENT MIC: LAST TIME – on Tuesday, that is – we left off with the *birth* of Canary's little social media account and it is ALREADY VERIFIED!

CANARY: …It is?

PRESENT MIC: YEAH! Have you not looked at it?

CANARY: I-I – um, occasionally… But I have schoolwork to do and –

PRESENT MIC: And that definitely wasn't last minute homework I saw you doing in the waiting room earlier!

CANARY: I-It was set today! It's due next week…

PRESENT MIC: Wait, so why were you doing it in such a hurry?

CANARY: S-So I could get it done before the radio show started?

PRESENT MIC: But you have all week to do it!

CANARY: By w-which time I'll have more homework. Aren't you supposed to do all work the day it's set unless you're overwhelmed?

PRESENT MIC: …Well, most of my students don't.

CANARY: I'm one of your students.

PRESENT MIC: YOU'RE FLUENT IN ENGLISH – YOU DON'T COUNT!

CANARY: …You still give me homework.

PRESENT MIC: That's because you *ask for it.*

CANARY: Everyone else is doing it… I-I might as well too…

PRESENT MIC: Ok, well – you're a way better student than I ever was.

CANARY: T-Thank you?

PRESENT MIC: MOVING ON – Let's have a look at the growing pile of questions, shall we?

CANARY: O-Ok!

PRESENT MIC: And the first thing I see is… A *super* long paragraph.

CANARY: It isn't that long.

PRESENT MIC: Says the guy who does English essays for fun.

CANARY: But –

PRESENT MIC: CUTTING TO THE CHASE – Music Lover – great name – asks this: We all know you go to UA and you're planning to go to the hero course with the Sports Festival, but how are we going to know who you are? Are you planning to show yourself in the beginning or after the festival starts?

CANARY: Oh, um –

PRESENT MIC: They also say that they can't wait to see you and they'll be watching at home and rooting for you!

CANARY: T-Thank you… Um, right – err, well, my Quirk's kind of tricky? A-And it's rather unique too. I think you'll know w-who I am when I start using it…

PRESENT MIC: Canary has an *awesome* singing Quirk! Look for the guy who's singing, and that's him!

CANARY: Oh, um, yeah, I suppose…

PRESENT MIC: NEXT QUESTION – Canary, you pick.

CANARY: O-Ok – um… this is from E-Evening Star. T-They ask: how do you have the courage to go on the radio, isn't it scary? I-I'm afraid to go on stage and I wanted to ask you how you do it. Can you help me?

PRESENT MIC: Canary's the wrong person to ask!

CANARY: I-I am… I have really bad a-anxiety. Social situations just make me… freeze up – like stage fright, only constantly. The radio feels different though. I-It was scary at first, but after a while, it just feels like I'm just talking to C-Cockatoo.

PRESENT MIC: By the way – if ONE MORE PERSON calls me MR COCKATOO at school *one more time!*

Canary's soft laughter can be heard

PRESENT MIC: I can tolerate *you* but *EVERYONE?!*

CANARY: P-Present Mic d-distracts me from my nervousness by m-making me talk about something else. T-That's where the random facts come in.

PRESENT MIC: WAIT – I NEED MY DOSE OF RANDOM TRIVIA – GO, CANARY – GO!

CANARY: E-Err, um – you can't just put me on the spot like that! W-Wait! Um…

PRESENT MIC: Whilst he panics in the corner for a moment, let me tell *you* what I told *Canary* before our first radio show! Everyone gets nervous – even the pro heroes coming in as guests get scared of the thought of coming in here! But what I find helps, is telling yourself that you're not nervous, you're *excited!* Excited to get it over and done with, perhaps – but the two emotions are surprisingly similar, and I find this helps a lot – Canary looks satisfied with himself – do we have a fact?

CANARY: A group of canaries is called an aria.

PRESENT MIC: That's a lie.

CANARY: No, it's not!

PRESENT MIC: It's a flock! Surely!

CANARY: A-And a group of cockatoos is called a chattering!

PRESENT MIC: Oh, come on – that can't be true; that sounds ridiculous.

CANARY: You're supposed to be an English teacher!

PRESENT MIC: WAIT – I'm looking it up – *wait.*

Distant typing is heard, before a pause and a gasp

PRESENT MIC: Why are you *always* right?!

Canary laughs again

PRESENT MIC: Right, one more question and then we'll move on to our next song!

CANARY: Oh, ok!

PRESENT MIC: Now, *speaking* of songs. I've collected into a little bundle here, many, *many*, people asking the same question. So… let's just chose a random representative… Nightwing15! And *they* ask – can you sing us a song?

CANARY: C-Can I what?

PRESENT MIC: You! Not me – look up any screeching cockatoo video on the internet and that's about as close as you're going to get.

CANARY: Um, I-I don't know…

PRESENT MIC: You don't have to! No worries – but you're a great singer – he's really good, listeners!

CANARY: I-I'm sorry but I –

PRESENT MIC: You're going to have to wait until the Sports Festival for that one, folks! But it's not far away, so we won't have to wait long! In the meantime – let's have some music!

“You ok there, Canary?” questioned Present Mic as they both took off their headphones.

Midoriya had told his teacher about the incident with the key card earlier. He mentioned everything, including how Jiro found out – excluding what she said about his singing.

“I’m going to have to sing in the Sports Festival,” he said, aware of how quiet his voice was. “B-But… I don’t know if I *can*.”

“Sure you can!” Present Mic exclaimed. “You’re going to be awesome, and you know it!”

Midoriya didn’t say anything, just staring dolefully at the questions on his computer screen.

“We’ve got three more shows, not including this one, until the Sports Festival starts,” Present Mic reminded him. “That’s plenty of time! Look how far you’ve come already! Keep up this rate of progress and you’ll be ready for *sure*.”

Midoriya didn’t feel so convinced.

“You could always try.”

He looked up at Present Mic, “Try s-singing?” he repeated with a stutter.

“I’m not sure if you noticed – but there’s another radio room that can be accessed off the waiting room – it’s got another little window with blinds over it?”

“I-It does?”

“Yeah! I guess you might have thought that it was just part of this room – but it’s separate – and completely soundproof! Your Quirk won’t reach outside the room so you can sing whatever you want, granted it doesn’t destroy the place.”

Midoriya hesitated, ever conscious of the song playing on the radio as the time ticked by. “But what if I make a fool of myself?”

“You won’t,” insisted Present Mic. “How many times had you sung something seriously before I walked in on you singing the one that gave you wings?”

He wavered, thinking back over the times he’d activated his Quirk,

“Um, that was the fourth time…”

“And you were *awesome!* Just think! With that little practise, you were *that* good – and you’ve been singing an awful lot recently after school. Perhaps you’re even better now!” Present Mic exclaimed. “Plus, we can always make you sound better.”

Midoriya couldn’t help but laugh at that, “I-It’s fine! You don’t have to…”

There was a pause before Present Mic said, “So, you’ll do it?”

Midoriya didn’t meet his eyes. “I-I… I *want* to… But I’m nervous I’ll –”

“You’re not nervous!” he suddenly exclaimed.

Midoriya blinked at him.

“You’re *excited!”*

Silence follows the song as the music dies out, before Present Mic laughs in a mockingly villainous tone

CANARY: This is a bad idea.

PRESENT MIC: HE HAS BEEN CONVINCED!

CANARY: I-I am feeling less convinced by the second!

PRESENT MIC: He’s going to *sing* – THIS IS NOT A DRILL!

CANARY: T-This is so weird. I-I’m in a different room now, so my Quirk won’t affect Cockatoo – but I can still hear him over the radio. It’s strange – not being able to see him.

PRESENT MIC: He’s distracting himself. I told you – distractions help!

CANARY: T-This is a mistake…

PRESENT MIC: No pressure! No one’s pressurising you – we’re all good – and if you want to back out mid song, that’s fine – but we’re *all* rooting for you!

CANARY: T-Thanks…

PRESENT MIC: He chose the song – and I feel like this is him trying to tell us something.

CANARY: I also have no idea what my Quirk's going to do with it? So, maybe this isn't such a good idea?

PRESENT MIC: It'll be *fine*. What's the worst that could happen?

A brief moment of silence follows

CANARY: Bye, bye, radio station.

PRESENT MIC: No with *this* song!

CANARY: I suppose that would require q-quite a stretch of t-the imagination…

PRESENT MIC: We're confusing everyone, talking about your Quirk.

CANARY: I'm not telling anyone – you'll have to find out y-yourselves!

PRESENT MIC: AHHH – THE SUSPENSION IS KILLING US ALL!

CANARY: W-Well I don't know what I'm doing!

PRESENT MIC: I'm going then.

CANARY: Wait, what?

PRESENT MIC: I'm turning my mic off and listening! The music will start soon – have *fun!*

CANARY: Wait – no – what – why –

~Bad Day – Daniel Powter~

CANARY: *O-Ok* – this is happening. Please don't hate me for this.

Silence falls

“Where is the moment when needed the most?”

Midoriya almost couldn’t believe the words were falling from his mouth. He was alone, in the small studio booth, singing to the microphone that hung over his head. He clutched onto his headphones, almost pressing the backing track closer to his ears as he continued to sing.

“*They tell me your blue-skies fade to grey…”*

Present Mic had shown him the list of songs they were scheduled to play that evening. He hadn’t lied when he said that this was the one he chose – but it also so happened to be one of the ones they were going to use anyway. Perhaps it fitted into one of those Euphoria songs he mentioned – lighting the mood of others. Maybe it did the opposite. But Midoriya wasn’t focused on what his Quirk would do – it didn’t matter anyway. He wasn’t focusing on using it on himself, and no one was in earshot enough for it to affect them. His power wouldn’t travel over the radio – he’d already tried that.

“You’re faking a smile with the coffee to go…”

That reminded him of Shinso – he didn’t know why. Maybe it was the coffee bit – Shinso really liked his caffeine. It probably really disturbed his sleep schedule. Maybe that was the point.

What *did* matter was that, Quirk or no, Midoriya could feel a smile stretching across his face as he was lost to the tune. That was all that mattered now – he almost forgot, in that moment, that hundreds, maybe even thousands (*probably* thousands) of people were listening to him too.

“‘*Cause you had a bad day – you’re taking one down – you sing a sad song just to turn it around!”*

And maybe this *was* turning his day around. That smile of his grew wider.

The true meaning of the song, or whatever its lyrics were meant to convey, just didn’t matter anymore. All that did was the confidence that brewed steadily in Midoriya’s chest – how that mental barrier between thoughts and words simply crumbled as he sang. Perhaps this time, it wouldn’t be so hasty to build itself up again. Because, after all – what difference would the Sports Festival make after singing here?

The only difference then would be that people could *see* him as well as hear him.

"*You had a bad day."*

Present Mic was grinning. He smiled so wide it *hurt* – and it continued to hurt all the way through the song. He wondered how his little Canary was faring. He didn't *sound* nervous. That thought made him smile even *wider*.

They'd given him a sheet of lyrics, which Aozora hastily printed off for him. But the lack of the distinct sound of flapping paper, made Yamada wonder if Midoriya had even bothered with it.

"*Well you need a blue-sky holiday…"*

Perhaps it was part of his Quirk – remembering lyrics – that would explain how he was able to remember such obscure facts. Then again, that could just be Midoriya's above average intelligence shining through.

Present Mic was almost sad at the thought of Canary leaving his form group. But the world would be missing out on an incredible little hero if he didn't.

"*You had a bad day!"*

Shinso was sitting in his room, scrolling through the various Canary hashtags that earphone-girl had mentioned. People really did seem like they enjoyed listening to him. Shinso didn't blame them – he did too. He always knew what to say, even if he didn't say it out loud often enough.

He glanced at the clock – wait, isn't Midoriya's radio show on at the moment?

Shinso had never listened to it live – considering Midoriya had only

told him about it the day before.

He hastily found the Put Your Hands Up Radio website to tune in. Struggling with his earplugs in the process. He envied Jiro – she didn't have this problem.

His eyes widened when he eventually turned up the volume.

"*– you really don't mind. You had a bad day…"*

Midoriya was *singing*.

There was always music playing in the Jiro household. She blamed her parents – they were musicians after all.

They had always been quite fond of Present Mic's radio show. They said he ran his hero agency well – and if Jiro ended up a hero like him, they'd be more than proud. Jiro didn't see it. Present Mic was always too… *loud* for her liking.

What she *did* like, was when Canary joined the radio ensemble. He was a real breath of fresh air – and painstakingly relatable.

That was why she found herself joining the crowd surrounding the class 1-B girl with Canary's key card. She would have stepped in, but that Shinso guy beat her to it, and she was kind of interested into where this would lead.

That was when she saw the bundle of green hair snatch the card away from right under their noses, and then rematerialize next to Shinso like he'd learnt how to hide in plain sight from a young age.

Naturally, she followed them. She'd expected them to take the card straight to the Principal, so imagine her surprise when she heard Midoriya's voice – it was *Canary's* voice. So, she bottled away her inner fangirl and confronted them about it. And *gosh* Canary was *exactly* the same in real life as he was on the radio, only, perhaps a little *more* timid – if that were possible.

"*You kick up the leaves and the magic is lost…"*

And *wow* – he really *could* sing.

It was like, as soon as the music started, a switch was flipped inside of him, and all those anxieties and worries just faded away as the song swelled into being. Jiro wished *she* had that confidence. Talking was one thing – something that Midoriya couldn't seem to do well – but *singing?* Canary had the whole thing backwards!

"*You work at a smile and you go for a ride!"*

She looked forward to seeing what he could *really* do.

Midoriya was on the radio.

Mute, sweet little Midoriya – was *singing* on the radio.

Uraraka stared at the wall, the music playing softly across her apartment.

"*You had a bad day…"*

Midoriya was *Canary*.

Inko blew her nose, tossing the tissue into the growing *mountain* beside her. This was the first time she'd ever heard her son truly sing.

And it was beautiful.

The music faded out and Midoriya sang his last note. The problem with that song was that it faded out rather than having a definitive ending – so he had to make one up.

It couldn't have gone *too* badly.

Or it could have been horrendous.

Those were the only two explanations for the literal radio silence that followed the ending of the music.

PRESENT MIC: *YYYEEEAAAHHH!*

CANARY: AHHH! *No* – stop yelling in my ears when I'm not expecting it! P-Please!

Present Mic's roaring laughter is heard

PRESENT MIC: You did it!

CANARY: Um, y-yay?

PRESENT MIC: NO! You need to do a *proper* one.

CANARY: A proper… what?

Present Mic clears his throat

CANARY: Warning duly noted.

PRESENT MIC: *YYYEEEAAAHHH!*

CANARY: I-Is he finished? I took off my headphones – wait, yes, he's finished.

PRESENT MIC: Now, you go.

CANARY: Do I really have to –

PRESENT MIC: GO

Canary takes a deep breath

CANARY: *YYYYEEEAAHHHH~!*

Silence

PRESENT MIC: Did you just – he just sang that – that was *AWESOME!*

CANARY: I am never doing that again.

PRESENT MIC: WHAT! *NOOOOOO!*

CANARY: Can I come back now?

PRESENT MIC: I *guess*.

CANARY: What do you mean *you guess?!*

PRESENT MIC: Well then, let's have another *musical* interval as we save Canary from the little sound-proof booth!

CANARY: This next song better be from a musical.

As a Disney song began to play over the radio, Midoriya let the wireless headphone hang loose around his neck as he opened the door, to see Present Mic standing there waiting for him.

"HIGH FIVE!" he yelled, holding out his hand to do just that.

Midoriya beamed, and instead threw himself into a hug.

"*Aw!"* exclaimed Aozora from across the room. "Everything about that is adorable."

"Thank you," Midoriya whispered.

Present Mic hugged him back, "You're the one doing all the work, little co-host."

"Canary needs a matching leather jacket," interjected Aozora, "That would make him even *more* adorable. Seriously, your listeners don't know what they're missing out on."

"BUT CAN I HAVE A HIGH FIVE THOUGH?!" exclaimed Present Mic as they finished their hug.

Aozora filmed Midoriya jump up to reach his hand.

"After the Sports Festival – I'm posting this," the blue-skinned woman grinned as she replayed her video to Nakano.

"How are you feeling about the Sports Festival *now*, Canary?!" Present Mic questioned as they walked back over to the main studio.

Midoriya smiled, "I-I… I think I'm ready!"

Chapter End Notes

Welcome to the end notes!

Songs used in this chapter:

Bad Day – Daniel Powter

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3-LPChiTSA

Thank you **Eevee star**, **Eevee+star** and **Nightwing15** for your radio show questions! As you can tell, two of those usernames are VERY SIMILAR. So, I tried to avoid confusion. **Eevee star** is Music Lover (a name they suggested) and **Eevee+star** is Evening Star, because you didn't give me a name so I made one up. But thank you!

I have two more things to say. Ready for my excitement?

Guys.

GUYS.

I have MORE FANART gUYS

AAAAaaAAAhHHhhhhHHHHHH! Thank you SOOOOOOO MUCH **SunsetAnimations**!

https://sketch.sonymobile.com/feed/d2da5861-fdc8-4596-8956-63b81f4a162f

It's an *awesome* play on the Set Fire to The Rain scene mixed with the Wings scene – and it's so cool!!!

cries

AAAAANNNNNNDDDD – if my day can't get any better.

I have been '*blamed*' for being an inspiration for THIS one-shot story by **KazuSakai** – it's a *gift*.

dies

This has been requested: https://discord.gg/Sw7CtmK

Trustworthy

Chapter Notes

HI HI HI – I'm back, tis me!

So, I'm off travelling again tomorrow – but hopefully it won't affect the upload schedule this time, but just a heads up in case it does :)

On another note (I feel like I say that *a lot*…) I started a discord! Yay…

And it may have been a mistake.

It's here - https://discord.gg/Sw7CtmK - in case you want to come and make it more of a mistake. I'm also putting the link in the endnotes so I don't ever have to repeat it again XD. I added it panickily in the notes last chapter because I only made it after it was requested by… *searches through the mass of comments for the username* **aria_of_harmony** – so this is *their* fault. But it's also kind of fun so come say hi!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sure, Midoriya felt ready-ish for the Sports Festival.

His rising fame though?

…Not so much.

He heard people muttering about him on the train. Not *him*, of course – Canary. Having no idea that he was standing right behind them.

On his way to school, he often found himself walking alone up to the crossroads where Shinso would wait for him, or he would wait for Shinso – it was an unspoken (and unsigned) agreement they had made early into their friendship. It was rare that he'd bump into Iida, because he always arrived too early for Shinso, and thus too early for Midoriya. That meant, the only person he had the slightest chance in meeting at the train station, was Uraraka.

What he *didn't* expect, was for her to be waiting for his train to arrive, standing nervously on the platform as he stepped out.

"Hey, Midoriya!" she called out, hurrying over to him with a big smile stretching across her face.

He frowned and waved feebly in response as he began to walk out of the station with her.

"*So*, how are you today?" she asked, weaving expertly around people in the crowd.

Struggling to follow suit, Midoriya only gave her a thumbs up when they were free from the crowd of morning commuters.

"Good, good…" she replied.

They walked in silence for a while longer – which was nothing unusual.

It was only when they were a good distance from the train station, when the road they were walking along was all but empty, that Uraraka finally spoke what seemed to be on her mind all the while.

"I listened to the radio last night and I know it's you!" she exclaimed, her eyes clenched shut and her fists balled as she announced this.

Midoriya wasn't sure what to say. He clenched the strap of his backpack, biting the bottom of his lip as he looked down at his shoes.

"You… You have an incredible voice."

He slowly met her gaze, "You really think so?" he barely whispered.

Uraraka smiled in a sympathetic kind of way. She walked back over to him, linked her arm threw his and began to march him up the hill. "I'm your friend, Midori! And I'd never lie to you. Now come on, I'm dying to know! How did this happen?!"

"W-Well, um," he stuttered, still more than bewildered about her response. "I-I – well, I found my Q-Quirk."

"Oh *yeah!"* she exclaimed, taking her arm away from his so she could clap her hands in realisation. "Oh, my goshness – you're not Quirkless!"

Midoriya rubbed the back of his neck nervously. "N-No…"

“And it’s to do with *singing?* What?!” she squealed, bouncing up and down. “That’s sounds so cool!”

“U-Um, well – it’s a little tricky to get my head a-around,” he stammered.

“Everyone’s Quirks have their difficulties!” insisted Uraraka. “I mean, I have to sleep with mittens so I don’t float anything – Iida has to drink *gallons* of orange juice to get his engines working properly – there’s a guy in my class called Kaminari, he has an electric Quirk which short circuits his *brain* if he uses too much voltage at once! Then there’s – *wait!”*

Midoriya blinked at her, “W-What?”

“You’re going to compete in the Sports Festival, aren’t you?!”

“O-Oh, um, I suppose…”

“In which case don’t tell me anything!” she exclaimed, “Just in case we end up facing each other!”

Oh, Midoriya hadn’t thought about that – *what if he has to battle Shinso?*

“O-Ok then…”

“Who else knows that you’re Canary?” Uraraka whispered to him as more UA students crowded the road on their way to school.

“U-Um, from school?”

She nodded.

“J-Just you and Shinso… Oh, and, you know J-Jiro?”

“*Jiro?* She knows too?”

“She overheard me and Shinso talking…”

“Ah, I guess that makes sense – oh, speaking of which!”

They’d reached the crossroads now, where Shinso stood waiting; this time, he wasn’t alone.

“Hi, Jiro!” Uraraka called out as she rushed over to her friend.

[*Floaty heard my voice on the radio*] Midoriya explained to Shinso.

[*So, she knows?*] he confirmed.

Midoriya nodded.

“Well, that makes four of us,” Shinso sighed.

Uraraka gasped, “What about Iida?!”

“What about him?” frowned Jiro, crossing her arms.

“He’s heard Midoriya speak too. If he hears him on the radio, then he’ll connect the dots,” Shinso explained in a hushed voice.

“Ah, that would make five then,” Jiro realised. “You’re not great at keeping secrets, are you, Midoriya?”

Midoriya would beg to differ. He didn’t often open his mouth enough to let the secrets *out*.

“Don’t worry, I’ll tell Iida before he accidently lets the cat out of the bag!” Uraraka offered, “If that’s ok with you, of course.”

Midoriya just nodded again. There wasn’t really any other way around it.

“Operation Canary Protection Squad is go!” proclaimed Uraraka, in a much quieter voice than usual, whilst punching the air excitably.

…Canary Protection Squad?

“Seriously though,” said Jiro as they started walking again, “you’re not even in the hero course yet, but you’re further down the line than any of us are.”

“W-What? No, I-I’m not – you’ve all fought real villains!”

Jiro blinked at him in surprise. Perhaps she hadn’t expected him to speak – *Midoriya* certainly hadn’t.

“People know who you are,” Jiro acknowledged. “The Sports Festival this year will be packed for sure – but not just because of the first-year class who survived a villain attack – they’ll be looking for you.”

Midoriya bit his lip. She was right, of course – but that didn’t make it any less unnerving.

“Yeah! You’re getting super popular!” added Uraraka. “Mina was the one who showed Canary to our class, and *she* said she heard about it from one of her dance lessons and who *knows* where they heard it from.”

“Then there was that situation yesterday,” Jiro continued. “With your key card? It just makes everyone all the more curious.”

“Don’t freak out about it, Midoriya,” Shinso interjected.

Midoriya must have *looked* freaked for him to feel the need to intervene. He smiled at Shinso, thankful that he could see this.

“Besides, if we meet in the tournament round of the Sports Festival, you’ll lose anyway,” he smirked.

Uraraka frowned, opening her mouth to protest when Midoriya just nudged him playfully instead, grinning widely.

“We’d both have to fight Quirkless,” Midoriya replied in less than a whisper. “But you’d be surprised how useful dance class can be.”

“Wait, *dance?!”* exclaimed Uraraka.

Midoriya yelped in surprise, which caught a few odd stares as they walked into UA.

Uraraka grasped him by the shoulders and gingerly shook him back and forth, “Why must you hide these awesome skills from us?!” she cried.

“Hm, see? He’s not bad at keeping secrets at all – he just hides the unnecessary ones and spills the important ones,” Shinso realised.

Midoriya gave him a look.

“What? It’s true.”

“Speaking of secrets,” said Jiro, “Did you leave the *thing* at home this time?”

‘*She must be talking about the key card,”* Midoriya realised. So, he smiled and nodded as they reached the door to class 1-C. The girls’ class was a little way down the hall.

“Good,” Jiro nodded in satisfaction.

“We should go – Iida will have it out for us if we’re late!” Uraraka realised, and with a wave goodbye, both hero students were gone.

Shinso sighed, [*Well, that was a chore*]

[*What?*] Midoriya frowned as they walked into the classroom, [*They’re nice!*]

[*Too nice. Makes you think they have an ulterior motive*]

[*Don’t make me paranoid too!*]

“I’m not paranoid,” Shinso frowned as he sat down.

Their classmates narrowed their eyes at the two of them. It must have been strange, only understanding odd snippets of their conversations.

Shinso barely seemed to notice this as he continued speaking, “What I’m saying is they’re making you feel unnecessarily uncomfortable.”

[*They’re just pointing out the obvious*] Midoriya pouted, [*And yeah, it does make me scared for the Sports Festival, but I already was, so…*] he trailed off, unsure of what else to say, hands hovering vaguely in mid-air.

“What’s this about?” questioned Ohchi in a strangely exasperated tone of voice.

“None of your business,” Shinso shot back without a second thought.

Midoriya simply smiled apologetically at her.

“One day,” she continued, “I’ll know enough sign language for your conversations to not be so secret.”

“That’ll be a shame,” Shinso retorted.

Midoriya wasn’t quite sure what to do to deescalate the situation, so he just waved his arms about in hopes that they would get the message that he wasn’t encouraging this.

“Speaking of secrets…” said Koneko, her cat tail twitching in excitement as she leant on Ohchi’s desk. “You guys hear about the incident with Canary’s key card yesterday afternoon?”

Their eyes drifted back over to Shinso, who just glared back at them. Midoriya could do nothing but watch helplessly.

“I heard he dropped it somewhere and a girl from class 1-B found it – then *Shinso* tried to convince her to take it to Principal Nedzu, before it disappeared into thin air,” recited Kana, pushing her glasses back up her nose.

“Well, I heard he was on the radio again last night, so he must have gotten the key card back *somehow*,” snapped Shinso.

“Oh!” exclaimed Koneko, “I wonder who he is?! The whole mystery is *super* intriguing.”

“Well, he’s not in our class,” reckoned Matsumoto, who had his feet up on the desk behind Shinso. “None of us have a singing Quirk, right?”

“Well, the only Quirk we don’t know a thing about yet is *Shinso’s*,” realised Koneko, leaning further over Ohchi’s table, much to her distaste, to get closer to him.

“You really want to know about my Quirk?” Shinso snapped.

“Oh, *do* tell us all about –” Koneko stopped talking immediately, her eyes glassing over and a vacant expression spreading across her face.

“Go back to your seat and stop bothering me,” Shinso ordered, and the cat-like girl did exactly that.

Everyone stared at him.

“What the hell did you –” started Tachibana, but Present Mic slammed open the door before he could finish.

“*HHHHEEEEEEEELLLLLOOO,* my little listeners!” he cried, “How are we all today?!”

He made absolutely no sign of acknowledging the anxious atmosphere.

“Let’s take the register, *shall we?”*

Everyone nervously made their way to their seats, eyeing Shinso suspiciously as they went. When Present Mic finally reached Koneko’s name, Shinso decided to be dramatic – and he clicked his fingers as he broke his hold on her.

She blinked glancing around in bewilderment.

“I *said* – CAN WE GET A *YEAH* FROM ENA KONEKO?!?!” Present Mic repeated, pointing at her theatrically.

“Um, yeah?” she frowned, looking back over at Shinso and Ohchi, wondering how she got all the way back over to her desk without realising it.

The room was awfully tense as their teacher continued the rollcall.

“Give us a wave, Midoriya!”

He waved glumly.

“And a GOOD MORNING from Hitoshi Shinso?!”

“Morning,” he grumbled.

“AND LET’S FINISH OFF WITH A YEAH FROM MAKI MATSUMOTO?!?!”

“Yeah.”

“EXCELLENT! All *present* and correct!” he grinned widely. “Now just a little heads up for you all – the Sports Festival is just around the corner, barely a week’s remaining! You might find some of the hero students around school training – so try not to get in their way. But you’re all more than welcome to train too! The Sports Festival is a chance to show your stuff! An opportunity to be transferred to the hero course, even if you *didn’t* pass the entrance exam – or take it at all!”

Midoriya couldn’t wait for this all to be over – to finally be in the hero course with Shinso and to not have this silly secret identity… Of course, the hero course thing was still wishful thinking – but he couldn’t help but dream.

He wondered if Shinso daydreamed about that too. He must have felt awfully uncomfortable, with everyone staring at him and exchanging whispers and pointed looks all morning.

That was why Midoriya wasn’t at all caught off guard when Shinso grabbed a hold of his wrist and pulled him forcefully from the classroom as soon as lunch break began, leaving their bags behind.

They didn’t talk, sign or otherwise, as they waited in line for food – only a brief conversation occurred when Shinso asked what Midoriya

would be having so he could order for him. When Shinso sat down, he immediately began to wolf down his food, as if he wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible.

Midoriya tapped his chopsticks on the side of his bowl. That ringing noise reached Shinso's ears, so he sighed and looked up to read Midoriya's hands.

[*They'd be less hostile towards you if you tried to explain*] Midoriya tried.

Shinso put down his chopsticks, [*They wouldn't. They never do*]

[*UA is different. You showed me that*]

Shinso stared at him for a moment, struggling to think of a reply. [*We talked about this before. They see me as a villain and that's that*]

[*Well, what could you possibly do with your Quirk to make you a villain?*] Midoriya questioned. Of course, he knew the answer, but he was trying to prove a point.

Shinso blinked at him dumbfoundedly, "Seriously?"

[*Just give me an example*]

He sighed, [*I don't know – brainwashing someone into robbing a bank. That's often what people jump to for some reason*]

[*Well, what about my Quirk?*] Midoriya still felt weird, addressing a Quirk as his own.

"What about it?" Shinso frowned.

[*I can… think of plenty villainous things I could do with it…*]

"Oh yeah?" he smirked, "Like what?"

[*The right song could kill everyone in this room*]

Shinso's smile faded, [*I hadn't thought of that*]

[*Does that make me a villain?*]

"No, of course not – because you'd never do something like that."

[*Exactly*] Midoriya retorted, pausing to eat the first mouthful of his lunch.

“Exactly… what?” Shinso repeated.

Midoriya put down his chopsticks again. [*As in, I could use my Quirk to be a villain, like you could – but I won’t – like you won’t*]

A ghost of a smile appeared on his friend’s face, “I guess. But others just don’t see it that way.”

[*Then show them*] Midoriya told him with a look of determination, [*Show them you’re not a villain – I’m not the only one the Sports Festival gives an advantage to*]

Now Shinso really was smiling, “I look forward to it.”

Nodding in satisfaction, Midoriya finally turned to his slightly cooler lunch.

Shinso, who was a lot further ahead of Midoriya when it came to eating, ended up waiting for him to finish. That was when a group of people that Midoriya recognised to be from class 1-D sat down beside them. Curse the lunch hall and its lack of table space.

They didn’t bother the two of them on the whole. It was just awfully difficult to not eavesdrop on their conversations when Midoriya and Shinso couldn’t have one themselves. Especially when the topic swerved around to something that made Shinso supress a wicked grin and Midoriya wish he could sign and eat at the same time so he could have finished a little earlier.

“Oh my God – *speaking* of the Sports Festival, did anyone listen to Canary’s Hour last night?”

Midoriya and Shinso briefly exchanged glances.

“The real question is, who *didn’t*?”

“No, the real question is – how the hell is this related to the Sports Festival?”

“Because Canary’s competing in it? Duh.”

“His *singing* though!”

Shinso flicked a piece of his remaining rice at Midoriya, who just glared at him in response. Shinso’s grin was getting harder for him to hide.

“I wonder what class he’s in?”

“Well, he’s definitely not in ours – we’ve already had that conversation, remember. Hey, you guys are from class 1-C, right?”

Shinso turned to him to reply, “Yeah?”

“Well? Do you think Canary’s one of your lot?”

“He could be a second year,” was Shinso’s answer, trying and failing to dodge the question.

“He’s probably not though,” pointed out the girl who had brought the topic up in the first place. “Why would you try and transfer to the hero course as a second year? UA probably wouldn’t let them.”

“Well, if he is *one of ours*, he hasn’t said anything,” Shinso said, now expertly avoiding the truth.

“What do you think about it all?”

And now they’ve turned to Midoriya.

“Midoriya’s mute,” Midoriya’s saviour (alternately known as Shinso) snapped.

“*Oh*, sorry.”

And that was the end of *that* conversation.

Shinso actually started laughing as they walked back to the classroom. “Your face,” was all he managed.

[*Oh, shut up*] Midoriya signed as aggressively as possible, but Shinso’s smile was weirdly infectious.

[*You’re lucky the Sports Festival’s not that far away – or else there’s no way you’d keep your secret for long enough*] Shinso laughed as he signed.

Midoriya just crossed his arms as he plunged himself down in his seat, amongst his various open notebooks (fortunately, nothing Canary related).

Shinso just laughed again, “You think pouting’s going to help?”

Midoriya narrowed his eyes.

[*You look like an angry little bird*]

Offended, Midoriya reached behind him to try to playfully punch Shinso's shoulder, which again caught more than a few stares from their other classmates. But they didn't really care anymore.

At least they had each other.

"I hear-by initiate the very first meeting of the entire Cana– I mean *Midoriya* – protection squad!" Uraraka exclaimed as Midoriya and Shinso reached the small group of hero students, consisting of Iida, Uraraka and Jiro.

"You have no idea how hard it was to tell Iida your *secret* without him accidently telling everyone else in the process," Jiro sighed.

"In my defence, your method of doing so was rather baffling!" Iida protested, doing his little karate chops in the air as they began to walk.

"We only tried to get you in a quiet place where nobody would overhear!" Uraraka retorted.

"It's not my fault I can hear whenever someone's coming our way," added Jiro.

"Well, I don't think our day was quite as eventful," admitted Shinso, although Midoriya silently disagreed. He lowered his voice a little more, "Although, it's funny when people talk about Canary *with* the real Canary."

Uraraka laughed loudly, "Oh my gosh – that must be so weird!"

And the four of them continued to make fun of Midoriya the entire way to the train station. Apparently, he really did look like an angry little bird. Shinso didn't translate when Midoriya signed that angry little birds go for the eyes.

Although, all the talk about Canary did eventually force Midoriya to put his headphones in on the way home in order to block it out. The UA uniform did catch some looks and Midoriya really didn't want to have to go through the struggle of explaining his muteness *again*. He'd

prepared some notes on his phone ever since the incident with Mina, but he'd still rather avoid the situation.

However, the problem with music and Midoriya, was that ever since he discovered his Quirk, once he started listening, he found it incredibly hard to stop. He just loved to listen to songs and theorise what abilities they could possibly produce. That was what led him to go for a wander after his train arrived. He felt awkward, just pacing around his house listening to music. It was far easier just to delay his journey home instead.

Midoriya was really getting into the swing of his musical tangent, when he was abruptly stopped by an unfamiliar woman crashing right into him, knocking off his headphones.

"I'm so sorry!" she cried, scrambling to her feet and picking up the little drawstring bag she'd dropped in the process. "Sorry, are you ok?"

Midoriya nodded and got up by himself.

"Yeah, good?" she confirmed, and he just nodded again. "Good – *GREENIE COME BACK!"*

And she charged off again.

Midoriya blinked at her, '*Well, that was odd,'* he thought, turning off his headphones and hanging them around his neck.

The woman was now standing underneath a tree by the side of the road, her hands cupped to hold the open drawstring bag as she called for whoever *Greenie* was, up the tree.

Midoriya's curiosity got the better of him, and he jogged over to her side.

She smiled meekly at him, "My bird's escaped," she admitted. "It's not the first time either – I run that pet shop over there." She tilted her head in the direction of the little shop, its door swinging open in the wind, showing a little trail of bird seed that led from the shop to the woman's feet. That was when Midoriya realised it had come from the little bag, and she'd been using it in hopes of tempting the bird back to her. "Don't worry – she'll come back. She always does – she just likes to be difficult."

Midoriya hesitated before pulling his phone out of his pocket and

tapping on the notes app.

Can I help? he wrote.

“Catch Greenie?” she frowned, before sighing and looking up at the tree – the bird had started singing loudly, obviously rather proud of its escape.

At a second thought, he showed her one of his previously prepared notes:

Hello! My name is Izuku Midoriya and I am selectively mute. Sorry if this causes an inconvenience.

The woman smiled, “Hi, Midoriya – and no, don’t worry. But, uh – can you whistle?”

Midoriya cocked his head to one side to show his confusion.

“It’s Greenie – she’s the oddest canary I’ve *ever* had. But she responds well to whistling. Only, I can’t whistle! I’ll have to wait until my partner gets back…”

Midoriya looked back up at the tree. He couldn’t *see* the bird – and he hadn’t really tried whistling for a long time, but it wasn’t talking…

He waited for a moment as he listened to the distant bird song, and then repeated it the best he could.

The woman stared at him, stunned. Granted, it was quite an impressive thing to whistle.

Midoriya had to repeat the tune a few times before the tiny shape of the bird appeared on the lower most branches of the tree.

“Here,” insisted the pet shop owner, thrusting the bag of bird seed in Midoriya’s hands.

Whistling the tune one last time, Midoriya held out the seed in the same way the woman had, and Greenie finally flew down to perch on top of the bag.

The owner sighed in relief, “Oh, thank you so much – that would have been a nightmare otherwise. Come with me – don’t worry, she’s got bird seed now, she’s not going anywhere.”

And so, Midoriya followed the woman back across the street to her pet

shop, with the bird sitting smugly amongst all the food.

She slammed the door shut as soon as Midoriya stepped inside, but it didn't frighten the bird one bit. She just sat there, noticeably used to the scenario, but content with her bribe for returning.

"Thank you *so much* for your help," said the woman. "Greenie has a little cage of her own over there," she pointed at a little green cage near the window, its door left hanging open. There was a rather heavy padlock on it.

Midoriya frowned. There were quite a few different animals in the little store – but all the other birds were separated into only two cages. Why was Greenie all alone?

"Want to know the story behind that one?" the woman smiled, expertly reading Midoriya's bewilderment.

He nodded eagerly.

"Well, remember how I said she's the oddest canary I've ever had? Well, I wasn't exaggerating. You see, female canaries can't sing."

Greenie chirped at her in response.

She sighed, rubbing her temples in the stress of it all, "So I thought she was a boy – so I put her with the boys, and, well, she's definitely not a boy."

Midoriya glanced at the birds. Most of them were bright yellow – except the occasional one, which were more of a lime green colour, not quite like Greenie's feathers, but close enough for the assumption to be made.

"Then I put her in with the girls and *God* – she's so loud. Won't shut up – frightens the others half to death and pecks all their plumage out! So, the only logical solution was to separate her until someone's brave enough to buy her. But of course, no one does. They either want girl canaries because they don't sing – or boys because they do. And sometimes people want more than one so they're not lonely – I *always* say that canaries don't mind not having companions, but they never listen. And you can't put Greenie in with another boy, obviously, and she just attacks the girls!" she complained.

Midoriya looked down at Greenie. She looked like the happiest bird on Earth. Her entire body was concealed by the seed bag, which was

definitely was fuller to being with – and only her head was sticking out, staring at Midoriya complacently.

"But the little bastard doesn't like the cage. Keeps somehow unlocking it by herself – hence the padlock. Would you believe it, she *played dead* so I would open the cage to check on her and she just took off! Well, I won't be falling for *that* trick again, you hear me, Greenie?!" she hurried over to the lone cage to open it, and Midoriya hesitantly placed her inside. She didn't move from the bag.

Midoriya stepped back as the shop owner struggled to get Greenie out of the sack of bird seed. He glanced around the shop for a while, before his eyes lingered on the sign next to the other birds.

Canaries: Male or Female. Price varies. JP¥3000 +

Wait a second.

Canaries.

A smile stretched across Midoriya's face as he pulled his phone from his pocket once more.

Mum

Izuku: *Hi, Mum – so you know you were asking me what I wanted to do with the money from the radio station…?*

He was pleased to see she answered almost immediately.

Mum: *Did you find some merchandise you'd like? Because you can have whatever you want! It's your money. You don't need my permission :)*

Izuku: *Well, it's not exactly merchandise…*

Mum: *You can get anything you want, sweetie :)*

Izuku: *Then what's the rules with pets in our apartment?*

Mum: *You want a pet?*

Izuku: *It won't be much trouble, I promise! And I'll buy anything she needs and look after her and stuff!*

Mum: *I don't know Izuku, we can't have dogs or cats or anything large*

Izuku: *Even canaries?*

There was a moment of silence between them, whilst the dotted lines indicating that she was typing appeared and disappeared. All the while, the shop owner shouted mercilessly at Greenie, who had escaped the cage again and was now doing laps around the shop, screaming at the top of her tiny lungs.

Mum: *There are no rules against birds*

Izuku: *Does that mean I can get her?!*

Mum: *As long as you* promise *to look after her all by yourself. Cleaning out her… litter tray? And feeding her and remembering to buy toys and food.*

Izuku: *YES – THANK YOU SO MUCH*

Mum: *See you in a bit with your new friend then :)*

Greenie had now landed on Midoriya's head, nestling herself in happily amongst his curls.

The shop owner panted heavily, resting her hands on her knees, "She… She seems to… Really like you," she managed.

Midoriya grinned widely and held up his phone to her.

How much is she?

"H-How much?" she stuttered, her eyes darting between the message, Midoriya, and the little bird on top of his head. "You want to buy *her?!"*

He laughed and nodded.

She faltered, unsure of what to say, before holding her hand up like she was telling him to wait and dashing over to the phone behind the counter.

“Yeah hi! No, nothing’s wrong – no – well, yes – yeah, but it’s ok! No, I’m not kidding – *No*, I still can’t whistle – it’s not that weird! – Yes, someone helped – Yes – No, no it’s fine – Yes, but, if I said someone wanted to *buy* her, how much would she be? – That’s why I’m asking your opinion! – Yeah, same guy who helped – no, I wasn’t being hypothetical – *no* – yes, I know I’m the owner but still – that was my thought – ok, fine – you know what, you’re being useless – yes, yes – don’t worry, I’ve got it sorted now – yeah, no thanks to *you* – ok – ok, bye.”

She put the phone down and sighed exasperatingly, “What does the minimum say on the canary sign again?” she questioned Midoriya, before remembering that he couldn’t speak, and hurried over there to check herself. “Three thousand – no *two* thousand five hundred yen – that’s the price for you.”

So, after a quick call to his mum, a payment made and the necessary food, equipment and toys collected, Midoriya was sitting before the desk, about to sign the very small amount of paperwork required – compared to what Aozora put him through, it was nothing.

“You can change her name if you want,” the shop keeper pointed out, tapping the empty box where the name of the bird was supposed to be written. “You know? Since your name means green anyway. I only use Greenie because *apparently* I couldn’t call her Satan.”

Midoriya laughed as the bird, who still hadn’t let his hair, tweeted at her in protest.

“I’m kidding,” she grinned. “Anyway, do you have a name in mind?”

Midoriya frowned, he hadn’t really thought of that. He let his mind wander.

There really had been lots of talk about Canary – but Midoriya felt much safer amongst all that when it was just online. As his popularity grew so dramatically over the relatively short time he’d been on the radio, as did the theories – the questions – the speculations. One of the things that Midoriya found the most interesting, where the suggestions for what his Quirk might be. There had been all kinds of possibilities. One of the most popular was a play on lullabies, where his singing lulled people to sleep (which wasn’t impossible) – or another fan

favourite, an imaginary Quirk dubbed Siren Song.

Now, Midoriya knew all about the mythical being of Sirens – it had followed the same (at the time) useless tangent of research that had led him to stories about canaries in mine shafts. Sirens were Mermaids, whose singing hypnotised sailors into swimming out to the origin of the beautiful sound, only for them to be dragged to the deepest depths of the ocean, never to be seen again.

The Quirk Siren Song was supposed to be to do with hypnotism – something which Midoriya had eagerly sent to Shinso. Although, he'd yet to find a song that could give him such a power – he was sure there were plenty out there. For now, Midoriya was focusing on improving his abilities in certain songs, so they were as powerful as possible for the upcoming Sports Festival. Expanding his arsenal of songs was just a hobby at this point.

Midoriya smiled as he picked up the pen and filled in the bird's new name.

"Siren?" the shop keeper read aloud. "Close enough to Satan for me – anyway, there we go! She's all yours – or, you all *hers*. Either way."

After it had all been finalised, the kind shop keeper (whose name he never did catch) helped him load *Siren's* various supplies into her new cage (not the tattered old green one with the massive padlock attached) and grinning from ear to ear, Midoriya skipped out of the pet shop, with the bird still happily perched on top of his head.

Once he had returned to his path home, as the sun began to set, Midoriya looked up at the top of his head the best he could in hopes he could see Siren's little face. "So, you won't be needing dinner today then, I guess?"

The bird flew off his head and landed on his shoulder. She gave him a determined chirp.

"Oh, yes, I can talk," he said. He was talking to a bird. Oh well – there was no one around to hear him. "I just find it difficult, talking to Humans."

She chirped again, digging her tiny talons – which was *definitely* the appropriate word – into his blazer to ensure her grip.

"My name's Izuku Midoriya," he continued. "And your name is Siren now – I hope you like it."

There was a moment of silence before another satisfied tweet.

“I-I saw you didn’t like your cage at the pet shop. But don’t worry, I won’t lock this one if you don’t want – as long as you promise to keep your mess inside there and nowhere else.”

Chirp.

She obviously couldn’t understand him – but it was worth a shot.

“It’s funny. The shop keeper said that you weren’t supposed to be able to sing. But me? Well, I *have* to sing – it’s my Quirk, like a superpower. But I-I’m not very used to it. And I still get scared in front of people.”

Tweet, tweet.

“There’s a big sports festival coming up soon at my school. If I do well, I might be able to move to a better class – and I can train to become a hero. That way I can help as many people as possible – or anyone who needs help – you included,” he continued. It was kind of nice, letting his thoughts spill out of his head for once. “If I become a hero, my name will be Canary – that’s what people call me at the radio. I go there to help my confidence in speaking to people; maybe one day you could come too – that would be funny.”

He walked up the stairs to his flat, whilst making sure the little bird didn’t fall off. “Now, my home is up here. I live with my mum – she’s really nice. You’ll like her. But you *have* to be nice to her back, or else we might have some trouble letting you stay – oh and keep your voice down overnight. You don’t want to wake up the other people.”

Why was he talking to the bird again?

He unlocked the door and pushed it open, “Mum, I’m back!”

“I’m in the kitchen!” she called.

He closed the door behind him, kicked off his shoes and hurried over to meet her. “Mum, this is Siren – Siren, this is my mum!”

She smiled sweetly at him. Perhaps she thought it was silly, talking to the bird. But at least he was talking to *someone*.

“Oh, she’s very sweet – did she stay on your shoulder all the way back here?” she frowned. She was serving up dinner for the two of them –

just how long had Midoriya's detour been?

Midoriya nodded. "I don't think she's fond of cages – but she never goes far! She knows where food is."

Chirp.

Inko jumped at the noise. She put her hand over her heart as she spoke, "Well, she's your responsibility."

Tweet!

"A-And perhaps you're hers too," she laughed. "Well, go put her things in your room and then we'll have dinner – quick, before it all goes cold!"

And so Midoriya hurried over to his room, cleared a space by his computer, and rested Siren's birdcage there. He hastily set up the little perches for her – and food and water, but as he expected, Siren wasn't particularly hungry.

She *did* however – funnily enough – keep her mess inside her birdcage – hopping off Midoriya's shoulder to do just that.

He blinked at her. The shop keeper was right – she sure was a weird canary.

Then again, so was he.

Chapter End Notes

I have more fanart

*There's so much awesomeness I'm **dying***

https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/609079673992904934/609471412746321931/image0.png

This one's by **Jaroo0707**! And it's accidently symbolic for this chapter! *Yay*

And then there are other people starting art and – and – and – and *ahhhhhhhhhhh*

Was that all I needed to say? Hopefully…

Gear Up

Chapter Notes

FANART FANART FANART FANART

https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/609079673992904934/610583595182063702/IZUKU_CAN_FLY_NOW_BIATCH_KATSU_GET_READY.jpeg

I've just read the title of that picture XD Thank you so much **SoftLittleBlanket**!

And then there's Siren in the tree by **Jaroo0707**: https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/609079673992904934/610818844713287681/image0.png

https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/609079673992904934/610976767297191947/kanamidoriya.png

This one is from **Melchyrn**, which I saw only seconds ago and have returned here to panickily put in the notes because IT'S SO ADORABLE

And then I got bored on my *travels* that I mentioned, so I messed around with stuff too! It's on my tumblr because I had to make one to put my pictures *somewhere*: https://cloud-nine-and-three-quarters.tumblr.com/

Anyway! This is all so cool! Thank you so much for reading and making art and everything! It's amazing! :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya couldn't remember when his free time was filled with something other than research. Research into what? – you might ask.

Well, even Midoriya himself would struggle to give you a straight answer, for it involved anything and everything – wherever his mind wandered, he followed. Of course, it often wandered to Quirk analysis and hero trivia, but this time, it was a little different.

He had been scouring through the depths of the internet for information on UA general study students who transferred to the hero course after their first year Sports Festival. If he was aiming to do so himself, then he might as well gather as much intel on the process as humanly possible. However, the situation seemed to be as rare as Midoriya has initially suspected. Often, those who didn't pass the hero course entrance exam, never went on to do well enough in the Sports Festival to be offered a place. In fact, there was only one participant that Midoriya could get the slightest bit of information on who managed to achieve this feat – Shota Aizawa.

A little more digging – and the man's name was scarce and hard to come by. But he had done *so well* in his Sports Festival… there's no *way* UA would just ignore a talent like that… surely? But then again, in his subsequent years, Midoriya couldn't find any mention at all of Aizawa. Perhaps he didn't transfer at all in the end? In which case, what hope was there for Midoriya and Shinso?! That was when he looked up his Quirk –

It belonged to Eraser Head. *Eraser Head!* Class 1-A's homeroom teacher! Of *course* – he'd heard the name Aizawa before *somewhere*. Midoriya almost couldn't believe he hadn't made the connection before!

So, it really was possible.

But then, all Midoriya's digging paid off – not in the information about Mr Aizawa – but in none other than the *support* course students. They brought equipment and support items into the Sports Festival. Midoriya looked up the rules – and there it was.

Students from departments other than the hero course are permitted to utilise support items, regarding they developed them themselves, as those with hero course training are seen as having an advantage over competitors in other courses.

Midoriya could use support items.

He told Shinso all of this, but he wasn't that interested, for some reason. He was a little more intrigued by –

“You did *what?”* Shinso gaped.

“I-I bought a canary,” Midoriya grinned.

Shinso stared at him, “You’ve got to be kidding me.”

“B-But she’s amazing! I-I really think she has a Quirk – maybe a minor intelligence one!”

He sighed deeply, “You are unbelievable.”

“I got her on Friday. I thought I-I already told you this?”

“No – No, you did *not*.”

“I-I’ve been leaving her at home during school. I hope she’s a-alright…”

“She’s a *bird*.”

“Siren is a very *smart* bird.”

Shinso paused, “You called her *Siren?”*

Midoriya nodded happily.

He looked rather lost for words over the whole ordeal, which confused Midoriya rather a lot. Shinso then seemed to decide that he was done here and picked up his tray to join the queue to clean it up. Midoriya got to his feet and hurried after him. He’d already emptied his tray, after deciding he’d do so whilst the queue had died down but had returned to sit with Shinso anyway.

[*Hey, so – about the support items*] Midoriya pressed, eager to keep talking about the subject.

“I don’t know,” Shinso sighed – again. “What support items could possibly help my Quirk?”

[*I could think of lots! Like, what about* –]

“Stuff we can actually make in a few days, Midoriya.”

He hesitated, and then shrugged. All his ideas were rather complicated anyway…

“What about you?” pressed Shinso, “I’m guessing you have ideas of

your own."

Midoriya nodded eagerly, [*It would be simple, like a device to play music and maybe some speakers or headphones or something…*]

"Well, that all sounds pretty useful," Shinso agreed, "but how on *Earth* are you going to be able to make support items for yourself before the Sports Festival? Where are you going to get the equipment from or figure out how to design it all. We're not –"

The girl in front of them in the queue suddenly whipped her head around, spinning on the spot and almost sending her tray and Shinso's flying in the process.

"Ok, I've been listening to almost everything you just said," she admitted with wide eyes. "But hearing only one side of the conversation is tricky enough! You want to make support items for the Sports Festival?!"

Midoriya and Shinso blinked at her, "Um, yeah? What's it to you?" asked Shinso, narrowing his eyes.

She laughed loudly, walking backwards as the queue progressed. "The name's Mei Hatsume! And I'm just the girl you need!"

As it turned out, Hatsume was a first-year support course student, in class 1-F. She was… *incredibly* enthusiastic. Shinso wasn't too sure how he felt about her, but Midoriya was keen to take up her offer of helping him make the support items he needed during the few remaining lunchbreaks they had up until the Sports Festival began. But first, Midoriya was keen to hurry back to class 1-C to retrieve his backpack, full of all his Quirk notes.

Shinso hesitated outside their classroom. Glancing down the corridor, he could see a large crowd forming, not unlike when that girl from class 1-B found Midoriya's, or, *Canary's* key card to the radio building.

Leaving Midoriya to collect his things in class 1-C, Shinso wandered down towards the group in curiosity.

"…We're the class that survived a real villain attack," Shinso heard a

voice say, from just beyond the open door to class 1-A. “They want to see us for their own eyes.”

Shinso’s eyes widened – it was that boy, *Bakugo*.

Bakugo stopped short of the group, glaring at a guy from class 1-D, standing near the front. “At least now you know what a future pro looks like,” he leered. “Now move it, Extras.”

Shinso gritted his teeth as he heard the distant voices of Iida and Uraraka berating him for calling people *extras* just because he didn’t know them.

But Shinso had already heard enough. He pushed through the ground, making his way to the front. “So, this is class 1-A?” he growled. He’d only met a few of them before, but other than Iida, Uraraka and possibly that frog girl he’d been briefly introduced to – and maybe Jiro wasn’t so bad – every one of those hero course students seemed… “I heard you were impressive,” Shinso continued, now facing Bakugo head on. “But you just seem like a bonified *bastard*.”

Bakugo snarled at him, his hands twitching with barely contained rage as Iida and Uraraka stared on from behind him, a little terrified by the confrontation.

“I wanted to be on the hero course,” Shinso admitted. He saw how Uraraka’s expression warped as he said that. “But like far too many others here, I was forced to choose a different track – such as life.”

He saw the crowd moving to his left, and Midoriya burst past Koneko, who was standing nearby, almost stepping on her tail as he appeared by Shinso’s side, looking frantic and rather scared.

Shinso glanced at Midoriya before turning back to Bakugo. “If any of us do well in the Sports Festival, the teachers can decide to transfer us to the hero course – but you’ve only got two spots available, so they might have to transfer people out to make room. Either way, me and my friend here are after those spots – so I wouldn’t be so keen to be such an egotistical maniac. Or you’ll regret it, come next week.”

Bakugo’s eyes turned to Midoriya. “I don’t see a reason to be worried.”

Midoriya flinched, before turning to Shinso, [*Come on – we’re just aggravating them further we shouldn’t –*]

“I’m not about to be beaten by UA’s charity case,” Bakugo added

without a second thought.

Midoriya froze, his hands twitching in mid-movement. Was he… actually *angry?* The thought almost made Shinso smile. Angry little birds go for the eyes.

“You hear that, you mute, Quirkless bastard?” snarled the real bastard here. “Stay out of my way.”

Midoriya glared *daggers* at him. Shinso was actually impressed – he didn’t think Midoriya had it in him.

“HEY YOU!”

Bakugo’s gaze was torn from Midoriya to look at the newcomer towards the back of the crowd.

“I’M FROM CLASS 1-B NEXT DOOR TO YOU!” the hero students shouted.

Shinso rolled his eyes – *hero course students*.

Bakugo just ignored him, pushing harshly past Shinso and Midoriya to walk down towards the lunch hall.

“Dude, where are you going?!” exclaimed the red-head Shinso had briefly encountered beforehand. “You gotta say something! It’s your fault they’re all hating on us, Bakugo!”

“These people don’t matter,” he snarled, staring back at Midoriya again.

“Huh?”

“The only thing that’s important is that I beat them.”

“Oh yeah?” retorted Shinso.

Bakugo hesitated, looking back at him.

“What about Canary?” Shinso smirked, mimicking Midoriya’s death stare, “He’s not in the hero course either.”

“Then I’ll crush him,” and with that, Bakugo stormed off, alone.

Midoriya walked down the street towards the radio station that evening with Siren perched on his shoulder. He didn't feel like being alone.

"I just hate it," Midoriya sighed, kicking at the stones on the pavement. "I've had enough – I-I want to show him, show *everyone*, that I'm not useless – I'm *not* a charity case! I-I'm not… not *Deku*."

Chirp!

"Yeah, thanks," Midoriya muttered. "At least I have Hatsume helping me out now – and Shinso too, of course. But Hatsume's got so many good ideas! We talked to Mr Power Loader, that's the support course teacher, and he told us what we were allowed to do and how much we needed to make for our support items. It's lucky there wasn't anyone else there at lunchbreak. So, I could tell her what my Quirk was without any trouble, well, I mean, I signed and Shinso translated. She doesn't listen to the radio anyway, so she didn't realise that I'm Canary. She will though, eventually."

Tweet, tweet!

"What?" Midoriya frowned, and then looked ahead. It was the main entrance to the radio station – it was completely *swamped* with reporters.

He sighed, "I've had enough of crowds today…"

At least Midoriya had gotten changed from his UA uniform before heading over to the station, or else they could have very easily connected the dots. Fortunately enough, Midoriya was able to turn around and hurry off in the other direction before he was noticed, and ran all the way to the backdoor without being seen.

"Hey, well if it isn't Canary?!" one of the receptionists called out as Midoriya closed the door behind him. "Have you seen that crowd?"

Midoriya nodded, glancing towards the front door, it was rather daunting. They couldn't see him of course; the glass was blacked out on their side. But, from inside the building, Midoriya could see everything – the entire mob of people, desperate for a glimpse of –

"They're looking for *you*," the other receptionist grinned.

“M-Me?” Midoriya stammered.

“Yes, *you!”* she exclaimed. “The Sports Festival is just around the corner, and everyone is getting super hyped up! It’s *crazy*.”

“What’s *really* crazy, is trying to get through that mob to get into work,” sighed the first receptionist. “My key card doesn’t work for the back door, otherwise, that’s definitely the way I’d be going.”

“Technically, you *could* still come in through the front door,” the other pointed out. “No one knows what you look like yet.”

“T-They might guess…” Midoriya acknowledged, pressing the call button for the elevator.

“Yeah, and anyway, all this secret identity stuff isn’t going to last long. When’s the Sports Festival?”

“Um, a week and a day now, right? Isn’t it on next Wednesday?”

“Something like that.”

The elevator arrived and Midoriya hopped in, eager to get out of view of the media. He knew they couldn’t see him, but that didn’t make him feel any better about the situation.

“Hey, wait – Canary, is that a –” the receptionist couldn’t finish her question because the elevator’s doors had already closed on her. She was pointing out Siren, of course, who had now hopped onto Midoriya’s head. But she blended in remarkably well, so he couldn’t blame her for not noticing the little bird at first.

Midoriya didn’t plan on taking Siren into the studio, of course – but he always felt bad leaving her at home without him. It was clear Siren really enjoyed human company. When Midoriya wasn’t around, his mum explained that Siren tended to spend time with her instead. But whenever the door opened at the end of the school day, Siren tweeted excitably, zoomed across the house, and more than once, had catapulted herself right into Midoriya’s face. Midoriya had been trying to get his mum to delete the video evidence for the last few days but had yet to succeed.

The elevator doors slid open once more, revealing the waiting room in front of the studio. Present Mic was likely still inside, because he was nowhere to be seen. However, the usual were present and correct, and by that, he meant Nakano and, of course, Aozora.

“Evening, Canary!” she exclaimed as Midoriya stepped out of the lift.

“H-Hello,” Midoriya smiled, wandering over to his *nest*, which was what Aozora had now dubbed his armchair, and flopping into it happily.

Siren had to take flight for a moment to ensure she wasn’t squashed against the armchair – and that was how Aozora noticed her.

“HOLD UP A SECOND!” she cried, leaping to her feet and spreading her paperwork all over the floor.

She stepped on it as she literally *ran* over to Midoriya and stared at – not him – but what had now reasserted its position on top of Midoriya’s head.

“Oh – my – *God*,” she said, rather slowly in absolute astonishment. “Is that what I think it is?”

Midoriya grinned, “This is Siren – a-and yes, she’s a canary.”

Aozora actually shrieked, “THIS IS THE BEST THING EVER!”

Siren didn’t even flinch, and just chirped at her happily.

“W-Why?” stammered Midoriya.

Aozora grabbed his shoulders and shook him gently, “Canary has a canary – that is *genius!”*

“Actually, it wasn’t r-really intentional,” Midoriya admitted.

“Oh, that’s perfect,” Aozora sighed, “you’re too perfect. This is going to be *gold*.”

“W-Wait,” continued Midoriya, gingerly retrieving Siren from his curls and cradling her in his palms, “can’t you look after her whilst I’m in the studio?”

“*No*,” Aozora insisted, that freakishly wide grin spreading across her face, “you’ll be taking her in with you.”

“What?!” Midoriya exclaimed.

“YES! This is going to be *awesome!”*

“But, um, is that really a good idea?”

“The best – oh, and just to warn you, there’s a guest in there today.”

“A-A guest?!”

“Oh, don’t worry – you already know them. I made sure it would be someone you’ve already met. They’re from UA – you know Midnight, right?”

“O-Oh, yeah, I do.”

“Anyway – you and Siren better get in there! It’s almost six thirty! Go, go!”

And the blue skinned woman grasped Midoriya’s shoulders once more and pushed him towards the door to the studio. Siren flew back up and nestled in his green hair as he pushed open the door and hurried inside, with Aozora closing it behind him, that wicked grin refusing to leave her face.

“Oh my *gosh!”*

Midoriya blinked – there was Midnight, sitting in the seat opposite Present Mic, next to Midoriya’s usual one.

“It’s little *Midoriya?!”* she continued, gaping at him. “You’re Canary?!”

“H-Hi,” he squeaked.

Both heroes were in their civilian clothes. Present Mic had his hair tied back in a knot and was sporting his more casual leather jacket, rather than his hero one, covered in spikes. Meanwhile, Midnight was wearing a rather loose fitting, purple jumper that hung quite far down her legs, covering up what was *probably* shorts underneath. They were both wearing glasses – Midoriya didn’t know how he hadn’t realised they both needed glasses before – they just integrated them so well into their hero costumes that he hadn’t noticed they had a specific function.

Midoriya awkwardly assumed his usual seat beside Midnight.

“Aw!” she squealed, not dissimilar to Aozora, “You’re just too cute for *words!”*

Midoriya blushed furiously.

“I’ve been wondering who you might be,” Midnight admitted. “Yamada just refused to spill the details – but of *course*, it’s you. I

wouldn't want it to be any other!"

If it was possible, Midoriya grew even redder.

"Don't frighten him off!" Present Mic exclaimed.

Midnight ignored him. "Oh, but your *singing* – it's just – *yes!"*

"Nemuri, seriously," interjected Present Mic – adopting his *I'm not kidding around anymore!* voice.

Midnight laughed, "Are you excited for the Sports Festival then, Dearie?"

"I-I-I'm a little n-nervous, a-actually," he confessed.

"Which means *excitement!"* Present Mic exclaimed.

"O-Oh, y-yeah."

"Anyway – the song's coming to an end – so, headphones on, people!" said Present Mic, and Midoriya eagerly did just that, careful not to get Siren trapped underneath.

That was how she was finally noticed, and Midoriya struggled to suppress his grin at the look on Present Mic's face.

Present Mic's Radio Show!

Tuesdays and Thursdays 18:30 – 19:30

Canary's Hour

Silence

PRESENT MIC: Um… Canary?

CANARY: Yep?

PRESENT MIC: Is… that a real canary?

Distant chirping can be heard

CANARY: Yep.

Present Mic sighs

PRESENT MIC: Knowing you, there's a good story behind this.

CANARY: O-Ok, *so* –

Present Mic and Midnight laugh

CANARY: W-What?

PRESENT MIC: Nothing, nothing!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Do continue – I'm *intrigued*.

CANARY: Oh… um, ok – so, I-I was walking home a-and I bump into this woman w-who's trying to get a-a bird who's escaped from her pet shop out of a tree – and she said s-she needed to whistle to get her down, but she couldn't whistle. So, I did it – and got the bird back, and then she was complaining about h-how difficult this particular bird w-was. A-And then –

PRESENT MIC: You bought the bird.

CANARY: Y-Yeah!

Furious tweeting

CANARY: Oh, um – her name is Siren!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Siren? Oh, I do like that name.

PRESENT MIC: So, why Siren?!

CANARY: Oh! That's because sirens are mythical creatures – like mermaids, who sing to sailors and –

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: – And make them fall *hopelessly* in love! So, the poor boys swim out to sea, only for them to be dragged into the depths by the sirens and *eaten alive*.

A brief moment of silence follows, before Siren chirps contently

PRESENT MIC: And you called your *bird* this?!

CANARY: It suits her!

PRESENT MIC: …The man-eating demon creature?

CANARY: Uh huh!

Happy tweeting

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Oh, I love her already – I love both of you *aw!* You all don't know what you're missing out on. Our canaries are adorable!

PRESENT MIC: *And* you've broken him!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Oh, but it's *true!*

PRESENT MIC: ANYWAY! *WELCOME* TO CANARY'S HOUR! And our guest, the *wonderful* MIDNIGHT! Will be staying with us until the end of the show! Can I get a *YYYEEEAAAHHH?!*

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Yeah!

CANARY: Yay.

PRESENT MIC: WHAT IS WITH THE YAY?!

Siren tweets

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Siren's joining in! Oh, I love her *so much!*

PRESENT MIC: AS PER TRADITION – BEFORE I FORGET – CANARY, TELL US A FACT!

CANARY: Oh! I need to start preparing these before I come here… um, um – the… smallest bird in the world is t-the bee hummingbird, and it's five centimetres – or two inches – long.

PRESENT MIC: *WHAT?!*

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: My nails are longer than that.

CANARY: Y-You have very l-long nails.

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Why thank you! I just got them done.

PRESENT MIC: Why don't we *STAY ON TOPIC?!*

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Canary, why don't I just put him to sleep and we can do this ourselves.

Canary laughs and Siren chirps at Midnight

CANARY: I d-don't think he'd be v-very happy about that.

PRESENT MIC: No, I would not!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: We can stay on topic then – a bee hummingbird, did you say? Well, I don't think Present Mic would like a *bee* hummingbird?

PRESENT MIC: I wouldn't?

CANARY: Why not?

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Check his hero fact page.

CANARY: W-Why?

PRESENT MIC: What are you plotting – oh, Canary's got his phone out. They're whispering something to each other. Listeners! If this is the last you hear from me – blame Midnight.

Canary gasps and Midnight giggles

PRESENT MIC: Oh no.

CANARY: You have entomophobia?!

PRESENT MIC: …What?

CANARY: You're scared of bugs!

PRESENT MIC: *MOVING SWIFTLY FORWARDS!*

Midnight laughs evilly and Siren joins in

PRESENT MIC: *WE HAVE THE CANARY QUESTIONNAIRE TO COMPLETE!*

CANARY: O-Oh yeah…

PRESENT MIC: WHY DON'T WE START WITH CALLING SOMEONE UP?!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Once, when we were at UA together, there was a bug in Present Mic's gym uniform and –

PRESENT MIC: THE NUMBER TO CALL IS FIVE-FIVE-FIVE-O-ONE-HUNDRED! CALL TO SAVE A LIFE – I.E. MINE!

The dial tone for the phone rings out over the radio, drowning out Midnight's voice. Siren joins in and repeats the ringtone

LISTENER: …Err, hello?

PRESENT MIC: *WELCOME!* YOU'VE MADE IT ALL THE WAY TO CANARY'S HOUR ON PUT YOUR HANDS UP RADIO!

CANARY: Anyway, Midnight – you were saying?

PRESENT MIC: *NO!*

LISTENER: Oh my God – Hi! Wow, I'm actually talking to you guys! This is so cool!

CANARY: N-Nice to meet you! What's your name?

LISTENER: Hi, Canary! I'm Kagura – I'm like, a *huge* fan – I've booked tickets to the Sports Festival, so you *better* be a first year, because that's the event I'm seeing!

CANARY: I-I guess you'll just have to wait a-and see.

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: He's adorable, Kagura – you're going to absolutely *love* him!

LISTENER {KAGURA}: So, he *is* a first year?

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Curious little one, aren't you?

PRESENT MIC: Anyway, Kagura! What would you like to ask us?!

LISTENER {KAGURA}: Oh, right! Hi again, Canary!

CANARY: H-Hi.

LISTENER {KAGURA}: I really love your time on the radio; it makes me day *so* much better!

CANARY: Ah, t-thank you.

LISTENER {KAGURA}: So, my question – since your quirk is about singing, do you play an instrument, and, if so – what do you play?

CANARY: Oh, yeah, I do, actually! I um, play quite a few, um… piano, violin, guitar, drums – it's just a fun p-pastime.

LISTENER {KAGURA}: Oh, wow! You really play a lot!

PRESENT MIC: And he's really good!

CANARY: Oh, um, thank you…

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Oh! I really want to hear you play now!

PRESENT MIC: Do you have a song request, Kagura?!

LISTENER {KAGURA}: Sure thing!

"Aw, sorry for scaring you earlier, my little Canary," fawned Midnight, pulling Midoriya into a very constricting hug.

"I-It's ok," he managed, desperate to pull away from her.

That was when the door to the studio slammed open, to reveal Aozora, still smiling like a shark.

"Canary!" she exclaimed, "I need to take a picture with you and Siren!"

“W-Why?” Midoriya stammered, rather confused.

“Because when the Sports Festival’s over, Put Your Hands Up Radio has to update their website with pictures of you – and your social media account will need to too – and Siren’s got to be there, because she’s my new favourite thing!” Aozora insisted, a camera already in hand as she pulled Midoriya away from Midnight and to his feet.

Siren chirped very happily at Aozora. At least *she* was enjoying all this company. Midoriya just felt rather petrified.

Aozora led him out of the room, leaving Midnight to continue to rave about how sweet he was to Present Mic. She positioned him in front of a clear, white wall and stood back to take a picture. Midoriya had never felt so awkward in front of her – and that was *saying* something.

“Aw, Canary,” Aozora sighed, “It’s a camera! Not a *gun!* Come on, Siren – help me get his act together,” she said jokingly, not expecting Siren to take action.

She leapt off his head and hovered before him, tweeting frantically.

Midoriya laughed at smiled at the bird – she really was strange.

“Perfect!” Aozora exclaimed.

“Wait, what?”

“Now, back into the studio! We’ll take another photo in a minute, once you have the thing!”

“W-What thing? What? I don’t –” But Midoriya couldn’t finish his sentence because Aozora had already hurried out of the room and shut the door in his face.

Midnight grinned, “I *told* you that girl would be a good hire.”

PRESENT MIC: *And* we’re back!

CANARY: Y-Yay…

PRESENT MIC: Now, before we get to that thing –

CANARY: What thing?! I'm so confused!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Just wait – it'll be adorable – you'll see!

CANARY: S-Should I be scared?

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: No!

PRESENT MIC: MOVING ON! We still have some questions to answer, Canary!

CANARY: O-Oh, right.

PRESENT MIC: Pick a question, any question!

CANARY: O-Ok. Um, this is from Thoughtfully-Beautiful-Witch – and they ask, do you have any hobbies that doesn't have to do with heroics?

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: *Oh* – they also asked if you were *single?*

CANARY: Ha, ha… um, I-I – yes.

Midnight squeals

CANARY: U-Um, y-yes – I do have h-hobbies. As we s-said earlier, I, um, play a lot of instruments and stuff.

PRESENT MIC: And he dances!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: You *dance?!*

PRESENT MIC: We've broken him again – Midnight – tap him and he might uncurl from his ball.

Siren tweets aggressively

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Aw, I love Siren – she's all protective and adorable – look at those fluffed up little feathers!

PRESENT MIC: ONE MORE QUESTION BEFORE SIREN KILLS SOMEBODY!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Oh, let me choose one!

CANARY: Oh no.

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Don't worry – I won't choose a bad one… oh,

this one's good – it's from… Several-Wombats-In-A-Trench-Coat?

Canary snickers

PRESENT MIC: Is there a joke here that's going over our heads or is that just a funny concept?

CANARY: Oh, the collective noun for wombats is wisdom!

PRESENT MIC: No, it's not.

CANARY: It is!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: I would just trust him on this one.

PRESENT MIC: That I am – *ANYWAYS* – what do they ask?

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: Hey there, Canary – who's your favourite teacher at UA?

A brief moment of silence, promptly filled with a whistle from Siren

CANARY: Um…

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: *Me – it's me –*

PRESENT MIC: No, it's definitely me.

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: *I'll give you extra marks on your next homework.*

PRESENT MIC: You can't *bribe* him!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: You're only saying that because you *can't* bribe him!

PRESENT MIC: Only because *he's fluent in English and there's nothing I can do!*

CANARY: Um… Present Mic?

PRESENT MIC: CORRECT ANSWER!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: NO! He doesn't even teach you anything!

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH!

CANARY: B-But you're close to the top!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: It's ok, I forgive you – because *I'm that good a teacher* – I *forgive* my students when they give a wrong answer to give them the chance to *try again*.

CANARY: Err…

PRESENT MIC: I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH QUESTIONS FOR ONE DAY!

CANARY: Good idea…

PRESENT MIC: NOW WE CAN GIVE YOU THE THING!

Midnight gasps and claps her hands excitably

CANARY: I-I'm terrified.

Something slams on the table

CANARY: A b-box?

PRESENT MIC: A box TO BE OPENED!

CANARY: O-Ok…?

The sound of Canary opening the cardboard box can be heard

CANARY: Wait, is this –

Midnight squeals in delight

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH!

CANARY: Is this like yours?

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: AW! YOU MATCH!

PRESENT MIC: TRY IT ON AND DESCRIBE IT!

The sound of Canary moving the box and standing out of his chair is heard

CANARY: I-It's a black leather jacket! L-Like Present Mic's, but – wait, oh that's so cool! It has canary wings on the back – green like Siren's!

PRESENT MIC: And yours – but that's super confusing for our listeners!

CANARY: W-Wings are part of my Q-Quirk

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: I'm very confused about your Quirk.

PRESENT MIC: Well, you'll have to find out next week in the UA Sports Festival! So, we better see you all there!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: You know I'm going to be there.

CANARY: This is so cool! T-Thank you so much!

GUEST {MIDNIGHT}: I'm taking a picture; this is too cute!

PRESENT MIC: CUE THE MUSIC!

Aozora threw the door open again as soon as Present Mic clicked play on the next track.

"YES!" she cried for the second time that evening. "AS THE PROPHECY FORETOLD – *matching leather jackets!"* Aozora shot a look at Present Mic, "How dare you decide not to wear your hero costume today – now I can't take a picture of the two of you!"

"I'll wear it on Thursday, I promise!" Present Mic exclaimed, "*PLEASE FORGIVE ME!"* he added mockingly.

"Following the wise words of Midnight, that I shall," Aozora said solemnly as she dragged Midoriya from the studio to take another picture.

Stumbling in front of the white wall again, Midoriya didn't find it as hard to smile this time.

"Angle yourself so I can see the wings," Aozora instructed.

So, he did just that, with Siren perched on his open palm – she was better at photo-shoots than Midoriya was, it seemed.

Aozora squealed again in the upmost delight as she got the picture she wanted.

She turned to Midoriya, "I just thought I'd warn you. The Sports

Festival's on a Wednesday, so, you'll have Canary's Hour the day after, and the day before – are you ok with that?"

Midoriya nodded happily.

"Are you sure? You might be really worn out after the Sports Festival's finished," she acknowledged.

"W-Well, we get the day off school after the festival," Midoriya recalled, "So, I'll have all morning to r-recover, if I need to."

"Well then, two more shows until the day! I'll be in the stands – cheering you on!"

"T-Thank you."

"I'm sure you'll do great," she smiled, a little less terrifyingly, as she ushered him back into the studio.

"I-I really hope so…"

Chapter End Notes

Next up, the Sports Festival!!!

Thank you to **Toughtfullybeautifulwitch** and **Kagura-chan** for their questions today! And for Wombatman from our discord server for volunteering to be the one who asked the third question! Because I was too lazy to make up another name! Yay!

On another note,

Tomorrow's my exam results day.

aaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHH*HHHHHHHHHHHHH*

The Underestimated

Chapter Notes

> Welcome to the longest chapter in this story so far. I bring to you today something which is technically a double chapter – because I could have split this into two, but I did not. Now we have reached the beginning of the first climax of this story – it is time for me to go back and edit the tags, so, ignore that.
>
> And err, yeah – that's… all I have to say?
>
> *Except I got my exam results and I definitely don't have the highest grades in my school, no, definitely not.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya was sitting in the corner of the changing room just outside the Sports Festival arena, his head in his hands.

'Oh my God – this is actually happening!' his head screamed over and over again.

"Hey, Midoriya?"

He parted his fingers to catch a glimpse at Shinso's face.

[*It'll be fine. Don't worry*] he signed.

[*I'm going to mess up – I'll look ridiculous – what if I* –]

"Everyone, we've got to head into the arena now," Ohchi sighed, unknowingly interrupting Midoriya's and Shinso's conversation.

Midoriya gulped.

"You might want to take off those headphones then, Midoriya," she pointed out.

"Midoriya's allowed to wear them during the competition," Shinso snapped. "It's to block out other sounds to make him less nervous," he

explained, repeating the semi-lie that Hatsume had suggested.

In reality, the headphones did far more than noise cancelling. Most of it was Hatsume's idea, really, but Midoriya (much to Hatsume's dismay) was the one who put the pieces together, so Mr Power Loader had counted the support item as Midoriya's own.

The green headphones connected to a wire than ran under his shirt to a small device tied around his upper arm, out of sight for now. It was a simple MP3 player, with Canary's Arsenal downloaded onto it. All he needed to do was choose a track and the music would play from speakers attached to the headphones. There was a little microphone too, currently concealed within the right side of the support item. It would turn on if he pulled it out, so his voice could be amplified across the stadium – the very thought terrified him.

"Fine whatever – let's just get this out of the way," their class president sighed, and the rest of the class began to file out of the room after her.

Shinso held out his hand to pull Midoriya to his feet. He gladly accepted. His legs were shaking so much that he very much doubted he would be able to get up alone.

"Midoriya," Shinso repeated sternly.

He realised he had been hyperventilating – his vision blurry and his body trembling like there had been an earthquake.

His friend put his hands on his shoulders, gripping on the cloth of his UA sports uniform. The touch was all that was holding Midoriya together.

"Keep your headphones on," he whispered. "And you're in the radio station."

Midoriya blinked at him, his breathing steadily slowing to a normal pace.

"Close your eyes – and you're in the studio. You hear Present Mic, right? No one else – you're in that booth with him, and I'm the only one who's tuned in, got it?"

A wobbly smile spread across his face, and he nodded.

"Right, let's – oh my God."

Midoriya turned around, "*Siren!"*

Sure enough, there was the little green bird, perched on top of his bag; looking quite pleased with herself.

"*Stay here,"* he ordered. Siren simply chirped at him.

"Um, shouldn't we –" started Shinso.

"She'll be fine," Midoriya insisted.

Shinso grinned, "Then let's go."

"HEY!" Present Mic yelled, *"MAKE SOME NOISE, ALL YOU RABID SPORTS FANS! GET THOSE CAMERAS PREPPED, MEDIA HOARDS! This year we're bringing you some of the hottest performances in Sports Festival history, guaranteed! I've only got one question before we start this show! Are you READY?! Let me hear you scream as our students make their way to the big stage!"*

Shinso and Midoriya stood at the back of their class, waiting by their entrance to the stadium impatiently.

"This first group are no strangers to the spotlight!" continued Present Mic, *"You know them for withstanding a villain attack! The dazzling students lining up your TVs with solid gold skills – the hero course students of class 1-A!"*

The crowd roared as Kacchan's class made their way into the arena. Midoriya had been thinking hard about them… This was the class he and Shinso would join if they did well. But to do that… Midoriya might end up having to face his childhood tormentor once again.

"They haven't been getting nearly as much screen time, but this next group is still chocked full of talent. Welcome, hero course class 1-B!"

That was the cue for the other hero course to make their way out into the open. Midoriya caught a glimpse of some of the students that had found his key card not that long ago. That'll be another issue he'd have to confront…

"Next up, general studies classes C, D and E! Support classes F, G and H! And finally, business classes I, J and K!"

Midoriya almost stumbled as he followed Shinso out into the stadium. His eyes rested on the crowd and '*oh God, that's an awful lot of people!'*

“But they’re not just here to make up the numbers! Amongst these students are potential stars desperate to catch your eye and make it onto the hero course! That includes a little someone who goes by the name of Canary! But who could he be?!”

‘Oh God, oh God, oh God!’

“Give it up for all of UA’s first year contestants!”

[*This was a mistake!*] Midoriya signed frantically to Shinso.

Shinso didn’t reply, only grinning at him.

[*Don’t give me that look!*] Midoriya protested. [*I’m going to die!*]

“Now you’re just being dramatic,” Shinso sighed.

“I don’t care what Present Mic says. I get the feeling we’re just here to make the hero students look better,” groaned Matsumoto.

“I can’t wait for this to be over with,” added Ohchi with her usual, grumpy flare.

Midoriya noticed how Shinso narrowed his eyes at the back of their heads. He hoped Present Mic wasn’t only referring to Canary when he spoke about others wishing to get into the hero course…

“Now the introductory speech!” It was Midnight, standing on the stage before the students in her… *erotic* hero costume. There was a lot of murmur about that, prompting her to demand the crowd’s silence, before announcing that *Katsuki Bakugo* would be performing the student pledge.

[*This won’t end well…*] Midoriya signed to Shinso, who nodded in agreement.

“He’s the first-year rep?” gaped Mina, who wasn’t standing far from them. Class 1-C had ended up pretty close to 1-A in the crowd of students.

“I guess that hothead did finish first in the entrance tests,” sighed another hero student.

“Ugh, only for the hero course exams,” Ohchi rudely interjected, pointing at Midoriya with her thumb.

Midoriya waved feebly at them.

“Hey, wait, *you* came first for the general studies exams?!” Mina gaped.

“That girl obviously hates us…” whispered the other student.

If Ohchi had heard him say that, she didn’t make any indication.

Midoriya was glad he had his headphones hanging around his neck rather than over his ears, or else he really wouldn’t be able to hear anything at all.

“Yeah, and we’ve got *Bakugo* to thank for them not liking our class,” groaned a third 1-A student.

His childhood friend waltzed up to the stage, his hands in his pockets. He leaned into the microphone, and said, “I just wanna say, I’m gonna win.”

Midoriya jumped as the crowd broke out into hisses and boos.

“*What did he say?”*

“Class 1-A are so full of themselves!”

“Get of the stage!”

Midoriya just sighed. Trust Kacchan to say something like that…

He saw Iida leap forwards, berating him whilst chopping the air furiously, “Why would you be so disrespectful?! You’re representing us all!” he exclaimed.

Kacchan just turned and gave him a thumbs down, “Not my fault the rest of you are just steppingstones to my victory.”

“I can’t wait to crush this overconfident jerk!” yelled that kid from class 1-B, the one who had shouted at him before, when they were all crowding outside 1-A’s classroom. “It’s about time someone knocked him down to size!”

Kacchan wandered down of the stage, looking as unbothered as before as the rest of the year continued to shriek at him angrily.

The two caught glances for a moment as he walked past, purposely knocking Midoriya’s shoulder as he went.

He seemed… different from before – the Kacchan that Midoriya once

knew would have laughed – making it all a joke. Something had changed in him – perhaps he'd realised that he wasn't necessarily the best, not until he proved himself here, at the Sports Festival. This was him pushing his limits – and making the rest of his class targets in the process. But, that was good for Midoriya and Shinso. The world would take little notice of them. They could stay quiet; slip through the ranks until they were right near the top. Yeah, that just might work…

"Without further ado, it's time for us to get started!" announced Midnight, her amplified voice booming over the disgruntled crowd of students.

That was when they finally learned the nature of their fate – an obstacle course.

Midoriya pulled his headphones over his ears, deep in thought – a race around the outside of the arena? With Wings, he could win that easily – just fly over the obstacles, ahead of everyone else… but… then he'd draw attention to himself. They'd know he was Canary immediately, and the focus of the Sports Festival would shift from class 1-A to him. Would that really be a wise decision to make this early on in the competition? Or would it be safer to save Wings for a little later? True, he did have a second song ready in order to use flight twice, but it was far weaker.

"Now then, take your places, contestants!"

Midoriya's legs were shaking as the crowd swept him towards the gate to the outside of the arena.

When he finally came to a standstill, his eyes widened in panic as he glanced around – he couldn't see Shinso – where did he go?!

'No, focus – focus. This is a competition; you're against Shinso too. He'll be ok – you'll see him on the other side. Right now, focus on your own abilities," he told himself, clutching his headphones and pressing them close to his ears in hopes to block out the roar of the crowd. '*I can do this Quirkless – save my power for later. That way I won't tire myself out before the tournament round – if I can get that far…'*

"BEGIN!"

'*Oh shoot – the doorway.'*

The student body rammed past Midoriya's shoulders, desperate to push themselves through the gateway as fast as possible. It was just

like when the press invaded campus and that alarm went off… No one could get anywhere at all. Midoriya hung back – panicked as his mind raced over what he could possibly do to pass this without his Quirk.

He heard Present Mic's voice ring out across the stadium. There was someone else with him – was that Eraser Head?!

'*Focus, focus!'* he told himself, and Midoriya hurried forwards to the back of the mob of competitors, all pushing and shoving as they desperately fought through.

There was no way Midoriya would be able to get past on time; he shouldn't have hesitated! They were all packed together so tightly; enough to almost walk across –

'*Oh, everyone's going to hate me.'*

Whilst the camera's turned their focus to the students at the front, where one of which had just covered half the floor in ice, Midoriya took a few steps back, and then charged at the back of the group.

He silently thanked those, once unnecessary, flips and leaps he'd learnt during dance as he did a running jump. He twisted around, his hands grasping the shoulders of the closest competitor and flipping backwards over the heads of the students. Midoriya was light, but the force of him landing on someone's shoulders was still more than enough to knock them to the ground if they weren't prepared. People cried out in surprise as the small, green haired nobody from general studies ran *over* the crowd, pushing himself off the wall and landing on top of person after person, expertly keeping his balance as the others did not.

The crowd thinned as the road widened at the end of the doorway. Midoriya leapt towards the ground but immediately slipped on the ice, which he had completely forgot about in the heat of the moment, knocking his headphones off as the side of his face connected painfully with the floor.

"Watch where you step, Midoriya!"

He scrambled to his feet as he looked for the origin of the voice.

Shinso gave him a mock salute as he was carried like a king by several brainwashed strangers over the thick layer of ice. He turned towards the front, where a large group of hero students disappeared off into the distance, "So, they are good at using their Quirks," he realised,

before turning back to Midoriya, who was now skating uncertainly by his side. [*You're not using yours?*] he signed with a frown.

[*Too much attention*] Midoriya barely managed. Maintaining his balance was now proving to be a little more of a challenge.

"Hm, interesting tactic," he replied as numerous students shrieked in fright, sliding between them on the rapidly melting ice rink, "Well, I'll see you at the end of this – no point in sticking together here."

Midoriya nodded, readjusting his headphones once more and sliding away on the last of the ice. With firmer footing, Midoriya broke out at a run, dodging other competitors as he tried to get as far ahead as possible. If there had been anything Midoriya had learnt from being Quirkless, it was how to dodge, and how to run.

But he skidded to a halt as Present Mic's voice rang out across the racetrack. The speaker was right next to him – enough for the sound to get through his headphones.

"–He's never even fought those robots before! But they didn't stand a chance against his jaw dropping moves!" Present Mic exclaimed.

Wait, *robots?!*

Midoriya gaped at the towering figures up ahead. One of the giant monstrosities had collapsed in a cloud of dust and ice.

"What a show! Shouto Todoroki from class 1-A has taken the lead!"

'Todoroki, huh? He must be the one with the ice Quirk…' Midoriya had more pressing matters than thinking about the hero course students – but he couldn't stop his mind from going on a tangent as he saw Quirk after Quirk.

"–And it's Kirishima from class 1-A! What a hardcore debut from this rooky!" Midoriya heard Present Mic continued as the red-headed boy pushed his way out from under the fallen robot, quickly followed by that class 1-B boy – whose name appeared to be Tetsutetsu, who appeared to have a similar Quirk.

'*Hardening and steel?'* Midoriya frowned as Present Mic announced the basics of their Quirks over the speakers. '*They'd be tough opponents.'*

Then there was the boy who grew scales on his arms – Midoriya wondered what *he* could do – and then –

"*Bakugo?!*" yelled another hero student as Kacchan rocketed over the next robot with ease.

Midoriya shook his head, he couldn't just keep standing around – he'd have to get through there *somehow* – best do it when the robots are distracted.

He let his headphones slide down to his shoulders to register the details Present Mic was reading out as he ran – someone with a tape Quirk – another with something called *dark shadow* –

Other students began to follow his lead, running through the robot obstacle as quickly as they could to catch up with the leaders.

"…Class 1-A's learned not to hesitate," boomed an unfamiliar voice – one which Midoriya quickly realised belonged to Eraser Head.

His eyes connected with that of Jiro, who smirked at him as she easily disabled two small robots.

Midoriya had to sidestep to avoid the falling debris that Uraraka left in her wake – and the electric shock of another, blond classmate of hers.

'*Ah! All these Quirks are too distracting!'* he panicked internally as he took off at a run again, dodging and evading the best he could.

That was when *another* hero student stole the spotlight with a massive explosion – she'd somehow materialised *an entire cannon*. Midoriya gaped at her as the robot she'd faced crumpled to the ground, '*Oh my God, that was so cool!'*

With a path made through the obstacle, Midoriya summersaulted to avoid another robot and then charged past.

'*This round is obviously designed to give the hero students a chance to show their stuff and to get ahead in the competition – so most of the other classes should be eliminated. With around twenty students per class and… eleven classes – that's a maximum of two hundred and twenty students in this race! They need… sixteen students for the tournament round, and a decent number for the round before… probably enough to involve all of the hero students plus the tops of the other departments so… forty, maybe fifty students will advance – so, maybe I should aim for the top forty at least – ah!'*

Midoriya froze wobbling over the edge of a sheer drop and stumbling

backwards.

“EVERYONE! *Observe* what my brilliant gadgets can do!”

Midoriya blinked and turned to see Hatsume, giggling manically before the gathering crowd, headed by Uraraka and Mina.

“Hey!” Mina exclaimed, “How come you got to bring all that stuff?!”

“Students in the hero course get all kinds of combat training for their Quirks,” Hatsume leered. “In order to keep things fair and give us a fighting chance, we’re allowed to bring whatever gadgets and costumes we want into the games so long as we develop them ourselves! Ain’t that right, *Midoriya?!”*

Mina and Uraraka turned to see Midoriya, who was now standing with crossed arms and narrowed eyes by one of the ropes, which was connected at the cliff edge to the next rock across the terrifyingly high obstacle.

“Midoriya?” Mina frowned, likely not at all expecting him to be there.

He sighed, twisted his headphones around his neck, using a mechanism that Hatsume had designed so it wouldn’t fall off, and carefully lowered himself down to the rope to start pulling himself over the drop.

“My super cute little babies are sure to make a splash!” he heard Hatsume proclaim as she whizzed past him with her bundles of gadgets, laughing hysterically as she went.

“Watch out, Midoriya!”

He looked back to see Shinso standing at the edge of his rope. If Midoriya wasn’t still trying to keep his voice a secret, he would have yelled, ‘*How the heck did you catch up with me so quickly?!’* Instead, he kept his thoughts inside his head and simply pouted, pulling his ‘angry little bird face’, as Shinso followed his lead and grasped onto the rope himself.

“The hero students are widening the gap between us,” Shinso murmured to Midoriya as he helped him up off the first rope and the two of them made their way to the second.

[*We only need to make it to the top forty*] Midoriya signed whilst his hands were free.

“Really? What makes you think that?”

“I’m not one hundred percent sure,” Midoriya whispered in reply. “It’s only an assumption.”

“Are you sure you don’t want to use your Quirk yet? You could just use your wings and finish this race without any trouble.”

“I’m positive. We can get through this without it.”

Soon enough, the two of them were at the other side, panting as they both started running once more, the muscles in their arms aching from the effort.

“–THE REST OF THE COMPETITORS ARE CATCHING UP TOO!” Present Mic yelled over the racecourse.

Midoriya and Shinso froze once more as their eyes came to rest over the final obstacle.

“A mine field?” Shinso gaped, “Seriously? What is *wrong* with this school?!”

“And what’s this? Can our two leaders fight each other and stay in front of the competition?!” Present Mic continued as the two general studies students carefully began to hop over the buried mines.

“Go ahead,” Shinso insisted.

Midoriya almost fell on a mine in surprise.

“I’ll use my Quirk to get through this – I know you’re faster than me,” he grinned. “See you at the finish line.”

Midoriya nodded, and then charged ahead of his friend, using the same fancy footwork that he’d put into action at the very beginning of the obstacle course, in order to evade the various explosions and lumps of the hidden mines.

“Todoroki and Bakugo are neck and neck for the lead and knocking *on the finish line!”* Present Mic announced.

Midoriya vaguely wondered if the hero was looking for him over the mass of students reaching the end of the mine field.

He gritted his teeth as he finally rolled out of the minefield, running alongside the vaguely familiar faces of the hero course as he charged

back towards the stadium where the screaming audience awaited.

"The first to make it back to the arena is the first-place winner…!

"Shouto Todoroki is our champion!"

Midoriya fell to his knees, sweating and panting by the gate. He couldn't have been that far behind – surely he was in the clear.

"The contestants are now pouring in, one after the other!"

Midoriya raised his head, staring at the booth he knew his mentor was sitting in. He could see the tip of his outrageous hairdo. He smiled.

"Let's hear some applause for all *our competitors as we prepare the results!"*

"Midoriya – you made it," Shinso panted as he hurried over to him. "Still a shame – you could have left all those hero-wannabees in your dust if you used your Quirk."

Midoriya smiled meekly, [*Well, let's just hope we've done enough*]

And they had – twenty-second place wasn't bad at all for Midoriya – and Shinso seemed satisfied enough with twenty-seventh.

"We beat so many of the hero course students," Shinso breathed.

[*I think… all of the hero students got through*] Midoriya realised.

"Who else? Us – oh, there's Hatsume – and over there – I don't know who that is."

[*Class 1-K, I think – that one who Jiro mentioned was expelled from class 1-A*]

"That purple midget? No wonder he was kicked out. He looks more interested in the *girls* than actual heroics," Shinso sneered as the boy in question was levered away from a girl's back. He seemed to have stuck himself there, forcing her to carry him over the finishing line.

“Now the real fun is about to begin. The chance to fully move yourselves into the limelight. Give it your best!” Midnight announced as the top forty-two contestants were gathered before her. “Let’s see what we have in store for you next…”

“A cavalry battle?” groaned one of the hero students, “I’m terrible at those!”

“Allow me to explain!” Midnight exclaimed. “The participants will form teams of two to four people as they see fit –”

“We could go in a team of two,” Shinso suggested, beginning to plot before Midnight had even finished explaining the rules.

[*It seems like I’d have one hundred points and you’d have seventy-five…*] Midoriya signed absentmindedly as he thought over the maths in his head.

“–And the point value assigned to the first-place contestant is… ten million!”

Midoriya didn’t miss that sadistic grin that spread across Shinso’s face as he glared in Todoroki’s direction, “Interesting…”

“Now, you’ve got fifteen minutes to build your teams,” Midnight finished after further explaining the rules, “I recommend you get started!”

[*We’d have one hundred and seventy-five points together – likely not enough to make it through to the next round if we don’t steal any other headbands – and there’s no way I’m carrying you alone*] Midoriya pouted.

“I could carry you – you’re light as a feather,” Shinso joked.

Midoriya just elbowed him harshly.

“There’s no point in asking anyone else,” sighed Shinso. “None of the hero students are going to want to –”

“Who said anything about hero students?!”

Midoriya turned and suddenly Hatsume was right in his face. He shrieked as she exclaimed, “*I get you now!”*

“What are you talking about?” Shinso frowned, glaring daggers at her for interrupting.

“Both of you – you want in on the hero course, don’t you?”

They exchanged glances.

Hatsume laughed evilly, “And *you* specifically – they might not have eyes on you *now!* But they will,” she rubbed her hands together. “I didn’t realise it at first – but then I listened to the radio last night – and I’d know that voice anywhere!”

“*Shut up, would you?!”* Shinso hissed.

She waved him off, “Oh don’t worry – a big reveal on camera will be *far* more affective. And when you do – they’ll look back at what you’ve been doing in the Sports Festival and see *my* marvellous gadgets along the way! I would have teamed up with first place – but he seems to have made up his mind already.”

Midoriya turned to Shinso, [*This could work – what do you think?*]

Shinso glared at her again, before giving in and sighing deeply, “Fine.”

“Then let me show you my babies!”

“Your… what?”

[*What about some of the people in the hero course?*] Midoriya questioned.

“You know they won’t want to team up with us,” Shinso pointed out.

[*Those who know the truth about me might*]

“What’s he saying?” Hatsume asked Shinso shamelessly. “I don’t know the secret hand language.”

Shinso groaned, ignoring her and turning back to Midoriya, “Go and ask, but I seriously doubt they’ll team up.”

Midoriya hesitated, unsure about venturing off without Shinso, but then nodded when Hatsume assaulted his friend with her assortment of inventions, scurrying off to avoid her onslaught for a little longer.

Midoriya was used to how people tended not to notice him. Weaving through the crowd of plotting hero students – more than once he bumped shoulders and stepped on a few toes. He kept mouthing *sorry* whilst signing it in the process in hopes that they’d get the message.

He pushed past a group of 1-B students, smiling broadly as he spotted Iida on the other side. But that smile quickly faded when he saw him conversing with the boy with the ten million points, plotting their next moves with a newly formed team.

Next, he tried Uraraka. She wasn't far away from Iida, near Jiro but then… the two of them had too, alongside one of Jiro's friends – the boy with the bird head.

Uraraka waved excitably at Midoriya, beckoning him over, but he just smiling meekly in return, pointing at Shinso and Hatsume at the other side of the crowd. In understanding, she nodded and waved once more, turning back to her teammates to strategize.

Midoriya bit his lip. Shinso had been right after all – none of the hero students would want to –

He walked right into someone this time, but he was large; built like a rock, so he barely stumbled as Midoriya fell to the ground. He rubbed his head but looked up and saw the student holding out his hand to help him up. He smiled and gladly accepted it.

Sorry, he mouthed and signed again.

The boy did the same and turned away.

Midoriya was heading back to Shinso when he froze.

'Wait – he knew sign!'

He turned on his heel and ran back to the unfamiliar hero student. Midoriya had to stand on his tippy toes to tap him on the shoulder.

[*Do you have a team?*]

He blinked at Midoriya, surprised by his reappearance [*Do you?*]

[*Yes! I mean, there's three of us – you could join and make it four!*] Midoriya offered excitably. He was actually *talking* to someone new! Well, kind of talking. But it was so easy! No fidgeting with his fingers as he signed or shuffling about in panic.

[*I'm sorry, do I know you?*]

[*I'm from general studies! I have my classmate in my team and a friend from support. I understand if you don't want to team up with us though…*]

He hesitated, and then smiled. It was a strange smile – but a warm one, nonetheless, "I-I'm Koda," he whispered holding out his hand for Midoriya to shake.

"Midoriya," he said at an equally low volume, taking his hand eagerly. [*What's your Quirk – if you don't mind me asking*] he continued to sign as they wandered back over to Shinso and Hatsume.

[*I can give orders to animals…*] he admitted shyly. [*I know it's strange, not talking to Humans but talking to animals*]

[*No! I completely understand! Humans are difficult – but animals – they always understand. Well, not* understand*, understand – but, well, understand your emotions. Not… necessarily the words…*] Ok, this was new – the word vomit, or… sign…

"What the hell are you on about?" Shinso interjected, raising an eyebrow at him.

[*Oh! This is… K-O-D-A*] Midoriya eagerly explained whilst Hatsume just watched on in bewilderment. He turned to Koda, [*Wait, what's your sign name?*]

[*I don't have one really… I've never spoken to someone else who knows sign like this before!*]

"*And* now there's three of you!" Hatsume laughed. "So, big guy – if your joining us, come here so I can suit you up with some of my super cute babies!"

[*Sorry about her*] Shinso sighed. [*What's your Quirk?*]

[*He speaks to animals and can control them!*] Midoriya replied, bouncing up and down in excitement. It was such an incredible Quirk!

Shinso furrowed his brow in deep thought, "What animals can you use *here* though?"

Koda panicked and looked down at his feet in shame. He looked rather menacing at first glance, but in reality, he was far from it. [*They are scared off by the crowd. I'm sorry, my Quirk can't help you. I won't join your team if you don't want me anymore*]

Shinso rolled his eyes and pinched his brow, "No, no. Midoriya's not using his Quirk quite yet anyway. Besides, you'd make a strong front horse if you're still in."

Koda wavered, but then clenched his fists and nodded frantically.

“Good,” Shinso sighed. “Then all we need to do is decide if it’s me or Midoriya that’ll be the rider.”

Midoriya wasn’t keen on being the rider. The more he was out of the spotlight, the better. But… if he ended up needing to use his Quirk, then being on top would have the greatest strategic advantage, especially if –

“Midoriya – you’re muttering,” Shinso interjected with a smirk.

Midoriya blinked at him in surprise. He had? He was *muttering?!*

An alarm rang out over the stadium – their time was up.

“Right, Midoriya, you be the rider,” Shinso insisted as Hatsume immediately began to attach her various gadgets to his legs. “Hatsume and I will go either side of you whilst Koda stands at the front. Ok?”

“OK ALL YOU FIRST YEARS!” Present Mic exclaimed as Midoriya was clumsily lifted on top of the group. *“I hope you’re happy with your chosen teams!”*

“We need to hang back,” Midoriya whispered to the three of them, tying his three-hundred-point headband securely around his head. “Everyone will go straight for the ten million points, so it would be easier to just collect smaller headbands to work our way up to the top.”

“*THREE!”*

“Good luck, Midoriya!” Uraraka called from her team standing alongside his.

“*TWO!”*

He smiled and waved again, desperately hoping they wouldn’t run straight for him.

“*ONE!”*

“BEGIN!” Midnight finished and Uraraka’s team rocketed ahead, right towards Todoroki and the ten million points.

Midoriya let out a sigh of relief as his team stood still, assessing the competition from a distance instead of engaging in combat quite yet.

“We may have a good amount of points,” Midoriya continued to whisper, “But as students from different departments, the other teams are likely to underestimate us and leave us alone for now. We should wait until the other headbands move around before –”

That was when his headband was pulled from him, barely a minute after the game had begun.

“Sorry,” droned a blond boy from class 1-B. “But the lot of you were never going to hang around for long anyway,” he grinned as his team hurried away.

“Why pick on us?!” Shinso yelled back at him, in hot pursuit of the team.

He grinned and opened his mouth, “Because you’re –”

“Midoriya! Now!” Shinso yelled as his Quirk took a hold of their opponent.

Midoriya reached forwards and grasped a handful of headbands from around his neck.

“Monoma!” exclaimed one of the boy’s teammates. “What the heck –”

Shinso released his power as they ran away, desperate to make some distance between them.

“Did you get our original headband back?” he asked Midoriya, who glanced down at the white strips of fabric and nodded surely.

“Good, now we should – ah!”

And another team lunged towards them.

“Activate hover shoes!” Hatsume announced gleefully as the inventions she had designed let their team hover a few feet off the ground. Secondly, a small grappling hook was fired from her side, and without warning, she clicked a button and sent the group flying across the arena, straight towards the wall where her invention had fastened itself.

How they managed to stay in one piece was beyond Midoriya as Hatsume reeled her *baby* back in and Koda groaned quietly after being forced to dig his feet into the ground to stop them from running out of bounds.

"*Now, who wants to look at each student's points so far?!"* Present Mic yelled eagerly, and the scoreboard lit up before a surprised gasp from the crowd. *"Hold on here, this is an unexpected turn! Other than Todoroki, class 1-A's not doing so hot!"*

Midoriya quickly scanned the arena, his eyes resting on the members of class 1-B, who were snatching headbands from their sister class left and right. Even Kacchan had fallen behind.

"As expected," Shinso grumbled. "Everyone's so focused on class 1-A that they've forgotten about everyone else."

"But they're using that to their advantage…" Midoriya muttered, "Just like us."

"Ugh!" Hatsume exclaimed, "No one's paying attention to my beautiful babies! We simply *have* to get to the next round so I can prove my worth!"

"You're not the only one who has to prove themselves!" Shinso snapped as they charged forwards, unsure of where to go.

There was so much going on. Teams descended on Todoroki as Kacchan's charged ferociously at Monoma's.

"Class 1-B are all working together…" Midoriya gaped.

"Not for long," Shinso frowned.

Whatever trap they'd pulled to keep Kacchan at bay didn't last long. But Midoriya couldn't pay attention to that, because Todoroki was on the move.

"We could go for the ten million points!" Shinso suggested.

"No, it's too risky," contradicted Midoriya, "They're plotting something."

And they were. Soon enough, Midoriya saw the girl with the creation Quirk pull a thick blanket over the heads of her teammates, and the electric hero student light up beside her.

"Hatsume! Make us hover again, quickly!" Midoriya cried.

She didn't question his judgement, and the team was lifted off the ground as electricity buzzed around them.

Midoriya could *feel* the power run through him, and the static buzz around the air, but no pain frazzled his nerves.

“What the heck?” Shinso gaped as he watched every other team cry out in pain as they were shocked by Todoroki’s team.

“We’re not grounded,” Midoriya explained. “That means we can’t be electrocuted – as long as we keep our feet off the ground, he can’t hurt us.”

The ice came next, spreading under their feet as the other teams were frozen in place, practically knocking them out of the competition.

“This is our chance,” Shinso mumbled. “If we collect the headbands of the frozen teams, we should be able to get through this stupid round.”

But they weren’t the only ones following that line of reasoning. Midoriya could see Uraraka’s team ahead, picking up the headbands before they could even try.

“Now what, should we attack? We never told them about *my* Quirk,” Shinso continued, the threat lingering amongst his words.

Midoriya glanced around, desperate for his eyes to see a miraculous answer to their problems. If only –

“Koda!” he exclaimed, “Over there – there’s a bird!”

“COME HERE, LITTLE BIRD!” he yelled in his squeaky voice, his anxiety fading as quickly as Midoriya’s had.

The bird took off from the stands and flew towards them, its tweets lost to the roar of the stadium.

“Wait,” Shinso frowned, “isn’t that –”

Midoriya grinned widely, “Siren!”

Siren was a peculiar bird. She had always known that. The other birds don’t seem to see the world the way she did. They saw the inside of their cages and saw humans as sources of food. But, more importantly, they saw singing as nothing more than a method of flirting. Girl

canaries aren't meant to sing, her first human had told her. She was nice but didn't understand Siren. No one understood her.

Singing was fun. There was more uses for it than just as a mating call. Humans used noises all the time. Siren had spent much of her life learning to connect those noises with very specific things. Humans were clever – not like canaries. But some humans didn't use their smarts very well. They were silly. Siren found it annoying.

But she liked her new human very much. He gave her a new name. She'd liked it at first. But then she learnt what it *meant*. Now she likes it even more. *This* human understands her. And she understood him, even if he didn't quite realise it himself yet.

Something else she understood, was that her human needed help. He can sing too – but he's scared to, like the other canaries were. Siren has to teach him not to be scared anymore. He was doing better. But he was scared that morning – very scared. Of course, Siren had to protect him. She wouldn't be a very good guardian if she didn't. That was what she thought of herself as – a guardian. Specifically, *her* human's guardian, and maybe some of his friends too.

She followed him all the way to this very big; very loud place. There weren't any other birds there. It was *too* loud. But most of the humans didn't seem to mind, so neither should Siren.

It took her a while to understand what all these humans were doing. They were playing games like children and watching for some reason. But her human had been telling her how important this 'Sports Festival' thing was. This must be the Sports Festival then. In which case, she must make sure her human does well. She can't do that by just sitting and waiting by his portable nest. Very useful things, they were. It had books and food and other unnecessary things in it. But it was yellow. Yellow was Siren's second favourite colour.

Her human seemed to have made a new friend. Two, actually, but Siren was more focused on the big one who called out to her. He had a very *incising* voice. It was nice. Not as nice as *her* human's voice. But still nice.

"Siren, you have to help us!" her human told her as she hovered before them.

"Hello, Siren," said the new friend. "We need to get headbands!"

"Headbands? Those cloth things? You already have two. Why must you get

more?" Siren replied. She knew this new friend could understand her words. She couldn't explain how she knew – she just did.

"We need better ones to win this game!"

"*Ah, yes, winning is good. Winning will make my human happier. Where is the better one? I must have the better one."*

"Koda, I have an idea!" Siren's human suddenly exclaimed. "If we can get Siren to follow the ten-million-point headband, she could steal it last minute and take it to us!"

"*I can steal."*

"Oh, thank you, Siren! Yes, it looks like the one on Midoriya's head, but with a bigger number on it! Lots and lots of red numbers – can you get that one for us?"

"*I will steal."*

"Good! But you have to wait for us to tell you to do it, ok?" her human told her.

She tweeted back at him and flew to his head nest. That was her favourite nest of all.

"Y-You understand her too?" the new friend frowned as they all ran across the arena.

"Oh, no, I just guess."

Siren's human was very good at guessing.

"Do we really have to have this conversation *now?!"* exclaimed the purple friend. Siren liked the purple friend, because her human liked the purple friend. Purple was Siren's third favourite colour now.

They hurried around in circles for a while. Siren didn't quite get why they were taking so long. She wanted to *steal*.

"TIME FOR A COUNTDOWN!" Oh, she recognised that voice. That was Loud Human. She liked that human too – where was he?

"SIREN, NOW!" yelled her human.

"*YES!"* she chirped and took flight.

Siren had been watching – looking for the lots-and-lots-of-red-numbers-headband. She saw it with the icy human. He had it for a while. He wasn't very happy when the spiky haired human took it.

Siren narrowed her eyes as she flew over. She didn't like spiky human. She called him Explosion Human, but she would find a better name for him one day. One with a better ring to it. Siren didn't like the colour red so much. This human was very red.

But she must take the lots-and-lots-of-red-numbers-headband. After this, maybe she would like the colour red more. If red meant winning, then maybe she did like red.

Explosion Human hadn't seen her; he was focusing on Icy Human.

They were all acting very strange – piled on top of each other and running around the place. But Siren could wonder about that later. Right now, she could see her lots-and-lots-of-red-numbers-headband. Explosion Human had turned the headband around so the lots-and-lots-of-red-numbers weren't facing Icy Human. That was very important, because it meant that Siren could very easily see it.

She decided that she definitely liked numbers. She was still considering the colour red.

Loud Human was shouting lots, and Icy Human kept lunging at her lots-and-lots-of-red-numbers-headband.

Explosion Human fiddled with it, turning it so Siren could see the knot holding it together.

Yes, Siren was very good at undoing things.

And so, she grasped the headband with her talons (yes, they were talons; if you disagreed, she would show you *why* they were talons) and flew away with it.

There was lots and *lots* of shouting then.

She flew over the arena and back to her human, who grasped the lots-and-lots-of-red-numbers-headband, pulled it around his head and –

"TIME'S UP!"

And all the humans *roared.*

And *her* human was grinning. That was good. She should steal things

more often. She would do anything for her human.

Her human was green. Green was Siren's *favourite* colour.

Chapter End Notes

AND NOW YOU HAVE TO WAIT ANOTHER FOUR DAYS TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENS! Why do I always leave things on a cliff hanger? I mean, this isn't that bad of a cliff hanger, especially by my standards, but *still*.

On another note – *A R T*

https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/609079673992904934/611618743025532949/canary_fanart.png - look at the sassy little Siren, oh my god. Thank you **Infinitygalixy** from Discord!

https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/609079673992904934/611646826419978241/C2BF8DF7-99A5-4DB7-A15D-176F3E2AF30F.jpeg - and here we have the Disney Princess Midoriya, singing with the birds XD – thanks **Juniper** who also has no archive name!

https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/609079673992904934/612375388194209827/angry_siren.png - then there's this majestic creature – an angry Siren emoji that **SoftLittleBlanket** (who actually *has* an archive name) made for use in our Discord chats! XD

Oh yes, there is more art. No one is more happy than I am, trust me on this one. And I don't think I've even linked *all* of it here. The link to the Cloud 9.75 Discord is in the end-endnotes, so, there's more chaos there… lots of… chaos… and *art!*

Make Your Mark

Chapter Notes

Hi.

May I share with you this incredibly awesome piece of art?!

https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/609079673992904934/613121390207565844/canary_room_bubbles.gif

SoftLittleBlanket really is a blessing! Just look at all the detail! Every time I open it I find something new – with a whole load of inside jokes from the Discord included XD

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"WHAT A TURN OF EVENTS!" Present Mic screamed across the arena. "*Koji Koda – his Quirk, Anivoice! He can talk to and command any animal he wishes! Well, he sure is lucky that SOMEONE CAN'T KEEP THEIR BIRD IN CHECK!!"*

Midoriya tried not to flinch and arise suspicion.

[*I'm assuming he means you?*] Shinso smirked as Midoriya clambered down from his cavalry battle positioning, grinning broadly.

"*And with that, the second round is officially over!"* continued Present Mic. *"Now, let's take a look at who our top four teams are!"*

Midoriya pulled off the ten-million-point headband as he gazed around at the ice-covered stadium.

"In first-place, Team Midoriya! Who would have thought that the team with only one hero course student in it would come out on top?!"

[*Soon to be three*] Shinso grinned as Hatsume frantically pulled her various gadgets from him, muttering manically about her next move in the Sports Festival.

"In second-place, Team Bakugo!"

"DEKU! YOU'RE FREAKING *DEAD!"* Kacchan yelled from across the pitch, grasping his remaining headbands with one hand and letting off menacing explosions from the other.

[*T-That's not good…*] Midoriya signed with shaking hands.

"In third place we have Team Todoroki! So close, yet so far!"

And now Todoroki too, glared at Midoriya's team from a distance.

"*And in fourth place is Team Uraraka – scraping in ahead of team Tetsutetsu despite being frozen in place! Being able to nab points without moving sure was helpful!"*

[*Thank you for helping us*] Midoriya sighed, turning to Koda as he signed.

[*Thank you for helping me!*] Koda quickly replied, now he'd gotten over the shock of having attention drawn to him by Present Mic.

[*We're like team voice Quirks!*] Midoriya smiled.

[*And all of us communicate via sign language*] Shinso smirked.

[*And have been mute at some point or another*] added Midoriya.

[*Something is seriously wrong with our society…*]

That was when Siren swooped down and snatched the ten-million-point headband from where it had been hanging loosely around Midoriya's arm.

"Err, what's your bird doing now?" Shinso questioned, raising an eyebrow.

Siren simply chirped at the three of them (Hatsume had hurried off with her *babies* already) and took off towards the stands.

"Um, she's leaving," Shinso acknowledged, watching the bird disappear off with the headband trailing behind her. "She's leaving with the ten-million-points."

[*Ten million, six-hundred and fifteen, actually*] Midoriya corrected, doing nothing but watch her disappear.

“Well, that’s gone then.”

“These four valiant teams, will advance on, to the final round!” Present Mic proclaimed. “*Oh, and what’s this? We have an odd number! That means one member of our fifth-place crew, Team Tetsutetsu, will be joining us!”*

“We should get out of here before something bad happens,” Shinso warned Midoriya, glancing over to the distant figure of Kacchan, grinding his teeth and glaring menacingly at him.

“*NOW, LET’S TAKE AN HOUR LUNCH BREAK BEFORE WE START THE AFTERNOON FESTIVITIES! SEE YA SOON!”*

“Come on.” Shinso grabbed a hold of Midoriya’s wrist and dragged him towards the student exit.

Midoriya waved goodbye to a confused Koda as he went, no bothering to protest against Shinso as the two hurried away from the arena. They joined the steady stream of students already making their exit. After dropping off the remaining headband, they hurried towards the cafeteria, unnoticed.

The specialised exit from the arena led the students away from the crowds of the Sports Festival and back to the main school. At least, that was what *normally* happened. If, however, the audience was particularly keen, and were fast enough to get down from the stands, they could hover either side of the barricaded pathway for the competitors. It rarely happened – particularly for the first years. However, this seemed to be just *one of those years*.

“Come on, Canary!” yelled someone from the crowds.

“We know you’re in there!” added another with equal enthusiasm.

Midoriya trailed close behind Shinso, ducking his head, desperate not to be seen.

Present Mic had purposely not brought up the factor of Canary in the last round. Of course, there were only two students who remained that fit the bill for the radio star at all – Midoriya and Shinso. Other than Hatsume, who was female anyway, the two of them were the only ones not in the hero course. So, it wouldn’t be hard to assume that, if

Canary had made it into the finals, then it was obviously one of the two of them. Then again, Canary could have *not* made it through… But Present Mic had thought of that possibility too.

As Midoriya and Shinso filed away from the stadium, he could still hear his teacher's voice ringing out.

"*JUST A HEADS UP FOR YOU ALL!"* he began. "*Thank Team Tetsutetsu for letting their leader from class 1-B through into the final round! YEAH! What sportsmanship! Hey, Eraser, don't you think it's weird that only four competitors remain that aren't in your class?!"*

"Not at all. Class 1-B had a good strategy, overarching the entire competition, but it fell through in the end. I don't think many of us are surprised by this outcome."

"But what about the students not from the hero course?! Having three is certainly out of the ordinary!"

"Speak for yourself. Two of them are from your *class."*

"MY GENERAL STUDIES CLASS, YOU MEAN!"

"What about your radio kid?"

"Hey, Midoriya," said Shinso, stopping in his tracks and gazing back to the stadium as Midoriya walked right into him. "They're talking about us."

"WELL WE'VE SEEN HIS BIRD! Not sure about Canary himself though. Maybe next year – but we'll just have to wait and see!"

"Hm," Shinso frowned, [*Interesting phrasing*]

Midoriya hesitated, mulling it over in his mind as Present Mic continued to yell about the availabilities of food for the members of the audience, and for himself. [*It's to throw off suspicion, I think*]

[*It's technically not a lie. He said he wasn't sure if you would reveal yourself*]

"Hey! Keep moving, would you?!" exclaimed a kid from another class.

Midoriya jumped, signed *sorry*, and then ushered Shinso forwards. They *had* been blocking up the pathway by standing still and signing to each other.

Consequently, they weren't able to communicate again until they were finally in the lunch queue. Midoriya had pulled his headphones back over his ears, blocking out the consistently loud chatter. He'd yet to put his support item into proper use. And with Present Mic's words, he wondered if he would be able to *at all*.

Shinso tapped on his shoulder, [*What do you want to eat?*]

[*I'm not really that hungry…*]

[*You should eat*] Shinso insisted as they reached the front of the line. [*You need the energy*]

He ended up ordering two of whatever he'd chosen. Midoriya hadn't been paying attention – not that he could hear what Shinso had ordered anyway with the headphones on.

Shinso thrust a tray in his hands. Midoriya wobbled and barely managed to keep the bowl of steaming rice balanced. Shinso ended up paying for both of them. They often did that, taking alternate goes to pay. It made life just that little bit simpler.

Eventually, they sat down in the emptiest corner they could find.

Midoriya gazed around the dining hall, [*It's so strange, seeing everyone here in their PE kit rather than normal uniform*]

Shinso raised an eyebrow at him, "That's what you think is strange?"

[*But it is!*]

[*We're the two general studies students, competing in the final round of one of the biggest sporting events out there – and* that's *what you pick up as strange?*]

Midoriya smiled meekly, pocking at his rice with his chopsticks.

[*You're nervous*] Shinso signed. He had to do it twice because Midoriya didn't look up the first time he said it.

Midoriya just shrugged. Putting down his chopsticks, he replied, [*It's hard not to be, I suppose*]

Shinso hesitated, clearly uncertain of how to reply. He took a large bite of his food (that was one of the many benefits of sign language; you could very much talk with your mouth full). [*What was that thing Cockatoo is always saying to you on the radio?*]

Midoriya furrowed his brow, unsure of what Shinso could have meant.

“Damn it, what was it…” he murmured after he swallowed his mouthful. [*Right, you’re not nervous; you’re excited*]

Midoriya felt a small smile spreading across his face. He tended to imagine the voice of whoever was conversing in sign language with him and he couldn’t help but think of Present Mic’s when Shinso said those words, which was rather funny. Such an eccentric voice really didn’t match Shinso *at all*.

Midoriya shoved some rice in his mouth to stop himself from laughing. [*Thank you*]

Shinso blinked at him, clearly a little bewildered as to why such a simple phrase cheered him up so much. So, he just nodded, stared at his food for a moment or so, and then decided to follow Midoriya’s lead and actually start eating.

“EXCUSE ME!”

Midoriya and Shinso looked up. Midoriya with his mouth full to the brim with rice and Shinso with his next bite halfway there. Midoriya pulled off his headphones, letting them hang loose around his neck as he frowned at the guy who had made the sudden exclamation.

The entire cafeteria gradually fell silent as someone clambered on top of a table right in the middle of the room. Some of his friends laughed and pulled at his ankles in hopes to get him down, but he was having none of it.

“RIGHT – SO!” he continued, clapping his hands briefly to grasp the attention of anyone who had failed to notice him the first time around. “We all know Canary’s out of the Sports Festival!”

Midoriya gulped and Shinso dropped his rice back in his bowl.

“So, come on man, tell us who the heck you are!” he exclaimed. Midoriya didn’t recognise him. Although he could have been from class 1-D, or perhaps the business or support courses. “You can’t just hold out on us for another year! Come on! We know you’re in here!”

One of his friends tried pulling him down off the table again, but he wrestled free. “Come on, Canary! Give us a wave!”

Midoriya tore his eyes away and returned to his food.

Shinso glanced between him and the guy on the table, who was now trying to start the chant: *we want Canary!*

This was stupid. Ridiculous, even. Midoriya felt his cheeks flush red with anger – how dare he do something like that?

And then – the chanted stopped with a yell and a clatter.

Midoriya looked up in surprise, as the hall rang out with laughter.

The student was still standing on the table, but he'd accidently kicked an empty tray to the floor in panic, as he tried to duck and evade the swooping figure of little green bird.

Midoriya probably should have found some way to call her off, but he couldn't help his growing smile as Siren continuously dive-bombed the guy, the red and white head band she had previously stolen still trailing along behind her like a victory flag as she chirped furiously.

"I love that stupid little bird," Shinso whispered, shaking his head in disbelief. He'd only known her for a few hours, and she'd already won him over. How Siren hadn't be bought by someone else before Midoriya, was beyond him.

When he had finally managed to get off the table, everyone cheered, and Siren took off jubilantly into the air, now doing triumphant laps of the dining hall.

"Maybe we should stop her," Shinso pointed out.

"Maybe," Midoriya replied.

But they still did nothing.

Eventually, Siren flew off into the corridors of UA after a failed capture attempt, with the ten-million-point head band still stubbornly in tow.

With that chaos over and done with, Shinso and Midoriya tidied away their trays and hurried back towards the stadium. It was amazing how quickly an hour could pass with the weight of their future, bearing down on them.

"–But considering the wording of Present Mic's announcement, it's unclear as to whether the up and coming radio star, Canary, *did* advance to the final round of this year's UA Sports Festival."

Midoriya blinked at the reporter, standing right by the student entrance to the arena.

“Although the fact remains that somewhere in this huddle of students, now returning to the stadium for this afternoon’s events, Canary still remains, and might possibly still use this year’s Sports Festival as a chance to reveal his true identity, perhaps in the extra events before the tournament round.”

Shinso nudged him with a sly smirk. Midoriya shot a look back at him, and then grinned wildly at the camera before the reporter, hoping the slightest glimpse his face would momentarily appear in the footage, for the world to perhaps look back on.

“*IT’S ALMOST TIME FOR THE LAST ROUND!”* Present Mic cried excitably as Midoriya and Shinso followed the other students back into the spotlight. “*But before that, good news for everyone who didn’t make the finals! Since this is a Sports Festival, we prepared some* super *fun side games everyone can participate in! After they’re over, the sixteen students from our top teams will be digging it out, one on one in a tournament style fighting competition!”*

The first years gathered around in the centre of the arena, with the sixteen finalists, including Midoriya and Shinso, stood near the front, close to the stage that Midnight was standing on. She was holding a large yellow box, labelled *lots*. “Come closer and we’ll draw lots to see who you’re up against,” she explained, “then enjoy the pleasure of the recreational games before we start. The sixteen finalists have the option of participating in those activities *or* sitting out to prepare for battle. I’m sure you all want to conserve your stamina.” Getting down off her raised platform, she marched confidently straight towards Midoriya. “I’ll start with the first-place team!”

Midoriya felt his muscles seize up as the cameras turned towards him and Midnight thrust the box in his direction. She saw his panic, and smiled warmly, shaking the box about a bit.

Swallowing his fear, Midoriya somehow managed to raise his stiff arm and reach inside the box, pulling out a small piece of folded paper. But before he could open it, Midnight snatched it back off him, unfolded it herself, nodded and then turned to Shinso, who then followed the same pattern of choosing an opponent without knowing who it could have been.

Midnight did this for all of Midoriya’s team, as well as all of

Kacchan's, but then no one else.

There was a terribly tense silence as she put her hand to her ear, communicating with whoever was on the other side of her earpiece, hidden beneath her mane of hair.

"Take a look at the bracket, my dears!" she exclaimed once the organisation was finally over. Said bracket then appeared on the screens surrounding the stadium, finally revealing who would be facing who. "These are your opponents!"

The crowd cheered, but Midoriya blocked them out without needing to pull his headphones over his head again. All he could hear was a faint buzzing noise as he stared up at the screen.

Kaminari.

Wait, who was that?

"Looks like I'll be facing you in the semi-finals," Shinso scoffed, his voice cutting through the madness. "Shame. Would have been better if two general studies students made it all the way to the final match."

He let his eyes drift over to whoever Shinso was facing. He was the first match, against Jiro.

[*She doesn't know your Quirk, right?*] Midoriya questioned.

[*Not that I'm aware of*] Shinso confirmed.

"Sorry, Koda! But you're going *down!"* Mina exclaimed assuredly.

Koda looked about as nervous as Midoriya. Although, Midoriya secretly hoped he wouldn't be using Siren this time around – he'd hate for Mina to *melt* her…

"Oh, hey, wait, Midoriya?!" said Mina, hurrying over to him. "I didn't realise you were in the finals!"

"How could you *not?"* Shinso gaped, his tone of voice dripping with more venom than Mina could ever hope to imitate. "We *won* the cavalry battle."

Mina frowned at him, “Yeah, but like, I didn’t really realise it was *this* Midoriya – no offense.”

Midoriya furrowed his brow. What did she mean by that?

“Ah, wait – you’re *that* Midoriya! The Quirkless, mute one, right?” interjected that blond electric guy, who had now appeared beside Mina. “Hey, man, I’m Denki Kaminari,” he finished, holding out his hand for Midoriya to shake.

Midoriya *would* have taken it, if Shinso hadn’t knocked his hand out of the way in the last second. [*He’ll just shock you*] he signed, glaring at the hero students as he did so.

Kaminari exchanged a glance with Mina; pulling a weird face, he turned back to Shinso. “You must be Shinso, right? That general studies guy from the halls that other day.”

Shinso glared at him, “I’m sick and tired of being just *that general studies guy*. And I’m sure Midoriya’s pretty fed up of being *the Quirkless, mute one*.”

Midoriya didn’t meet Kaminari’s gaze as Shinso said those words.

“It’s time for us to make our mark. Come on, Midoriya,” he snarled, and began to march away, his hands in his pockets.

Midoriya hesitated, looking back at the small gathering of hero students with a weak, apologetic smile.

But… Kaminari, *Kaminari*… where had Midoriya heard that name before?

“Hey, if it makes you feel any better, I’ll just be giving you a quick shock and it’ll be over with,” Kaminari said confidently, holding up his hand with a crackle of electricity to demonstrate.

Midoriya’s eyes grew wide.

“And your Quirk’s to do with singing? What?!” Uraraka squealed excitably, bouncing up and down as she and Midoriya walked up to school. “That’s sounds so cool!”

“U-Um, well – it’s a little tricky to get my head a-around,” Midoriya had stammered in reply.

“Everyone’s Quirks have their difficulties!” Uraraka insisted. “I mean, I have to sleep with mittens so I don’t float anything – Iida has to drink gallons of orange juice to get his engines working properly – there’s a guy in my class called Kaminari, he has an electric Quirk which short circuits his brain if he uses too much voltage at once!”

Oh.

Midoriya let a smile grow across his expression.

Kaminari’s quickly faded. “…What?” he frowned.

“Hatsume! Make us hover again, quickly!” Midoriya had cried during the cavalry battle.

“What the heck?” Shinso gaped, watching every other team cry out in pain as they were shocked by Kaminari’s Quirk.

“We’re not grounded,” Midoriya hastily explained. “That means we can’t be electrocuted – as long as we keep our feet off the ground, he can’t hurt us.”

Oh.

Midoriya’s smile grew wider, and without an answer, he turned on his heel and ran after Shinso.

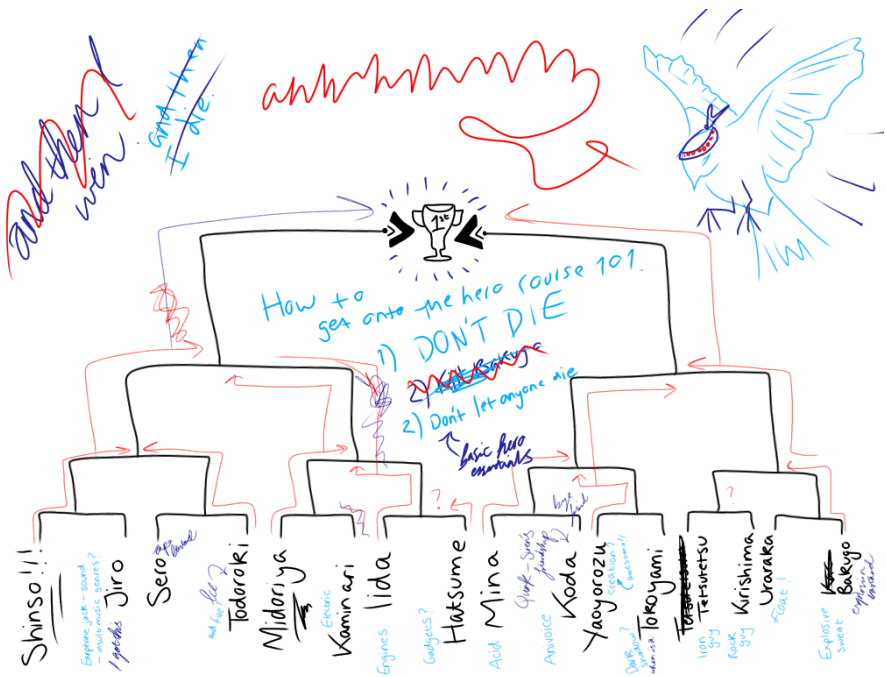
He could distantly hear Kaminari’s voice as he hurried away, “… Should I be worried?”

Maybe he should have been, but for once, Midoriya wasn’t.

As Present Mic's voice continued to bellow across the stadium, Shinso and Midoriya were sitting side by side in one of the waiting rooms, with Midoriya's sketch of the tournament bracket laid out before them.

Shinso sighed, "Everyone's so focused on looking for you during the side games, that they've missed the bigger picture."

Midoriya stared at the piece of paper before him. He'd started annotating it, and it had gotten a little manic. He'd also just realised – Shinso's handwriting was near to illegible.



"What did you do to my bird drawing?" Midoriya frowned.

"I gave it *talons*," Shinso grinned.

"Whatever they are – they're not talons – they look like *arms*, or… crooked *forks*."

"Shut up, they're amazing – look Siren has her headband now. Let me borrow your red pen so I can add the numbers."

“Wait – no – that’s ten million. It was ten million, six hundred and fifteen!”

“Technicalities.”

“We *won* with those technicalities!”

“We would have won with just ten million!”

Midoriya couldn’t think of an adequate response, so Shinso instead started doodling elsewhere on the paper instead.

Midoriya grabbed his red pen back and immediately scribbled out Shinso’s addition of *and then I win*, to their strategy sheet.

“Are you saying I’m *not* going to win?” Shinso queried with a quirked eyebrow.

“*No* – I-I’m not! I’m just –”

“You didn’t let me draw the arrow to say that *you’d* be in the final. And it’s going to be one of us so…”

“It might not be!” Midoriya protested, waving his arms about frantically as he spoke. “I might not beat Iida o-or you might not defeat Todoroki!”

[*As soon as they speak to me, it’s over*] Shinso retorted smugly, [*And I haven’t used my Quirk enough for anyone to figure that out yet*]

“T-They might after your fight against Jiro!” Midoriya pointed out. “O-Or Present Mic might announce your Quirk! He’s been doing that for the hero students so everyone understands what they can do, so…”

“My pessimism is rubbing off on you,” Shinso sighed, sinking back in his chair.

Midoriya pouted at him, “W-Well, if I get into the f-final, it’s not going to end… *well*…”

“Because you think Bakugo’s going to be against you,” realised Shinso, glancing back at the arrow on the brackets. They’d been debating for a while as to who would most likely beat who. Eventually it was concluded that it would be Bakugo, coming out on top and making it to the final round.

Biting his lip, Midoriya picked up his pen and added a new note next

to Shinso's crossed out one: *and then I die*.

Shinso snapped up his own pen and quickly drew a line through it.

Midoriya slammed his forehead on the table.

Shinso pulled the paper out from underneath him. He was busy adding random, snarky comments and adding to Midoriya's scribbles, when Midoriya decided enough was enough, knocking the pen from Shinso's hand before he was able to finish writing *when is a shadow not dark?* beneath Tokoyami's Quirk name. Now it just read, *when is a TOKOYAMI*.

"Midoriya, you're going to be *fine*," Shinso insisted as Midoriya picked up the red pen and started writing *ahhhhhhhh* along the top of the page, which just turned into an indecipherable squiggle by the end.

Shinso confiscated the red pen.

[*I am going to die*] Midoriya signed for the second time that day.

[*I'll make sure of it if you keep being this infuriating*] Shinso threatened.

Midoriya narrowed his eyes at him, and then reached for the only pen that remained in his possession. In the middle of the page, he wrote:

How to get into the hero course 101: 1) DON'T DIE

"Good, that's an improvement," Shinso smirked, before picking up his own pen and adding: *2) Kill Bakugo*

Midoriya quickly crossed that out, and then took the red pen back and crossed it out a second time, before finishing with:

2) Don't let anyone die

Shinso grinned. The final thing written on that mess of a strategy sheet was, *basic hero essentials*, before Midoriya folded it up and shoved it, along with the pens, back in his backpack.

"See you in the semi-finals, then," said Shinso, wandering towards the door.

"N-Not back in the stands after you've f-finished?" Midoriya frowned.

Shinso rolled his eyes as he left, "You know what I mean."

Midoriya just watched as Shinso walked out of sight, his footsteps echoing through the cold, concrete corridors.

Once even his shadow had completely faded, Midoriya pulled the strap of his backpack further up his shoulder and ran in the opposite direction.

Each of the eleven first year classes, A to K, had their own set of seats in the stands, separated from the main audience. They really did have front row seats. There were two sets of stairs leading up to them, one from either side, and then a long corridor that ran along behind the seats. Each class were only separated from each other by thin stone walls. Midoriya sprinted as fast as he could past the back of class 1-A's seating area, and didn't slow down at 1-B's either, only skidding to a halt at his own section, with the rest of class 1-C.

"Midoriya!" exclaimed Ohchi as he hurried into view, "Where have you *been?!"* she insisted.

He was about to sign an excuse in reply, but she waved it off.

"Rhetorical question; not like I'm good enough at sign language to understand you anyway," she sighed. "But you were almost late!"

"Come on, Quirkless wonder!" exclaimed Kisho. His fringe had grown a little longer again, but it still looked like someone had put a bowl on his head and cut around it. Shinso often pointed that out in their secret sign conversations. "We saved you a seat near the front!"

"Yeah, you deserve it, making it into the finals," added Kisho's twin sister, Kana.

"Not that he'll last long," Koneko protested, her cat tail twitching as she spoke. "He's against the electric dude, remember?"

And they're back to talking as if Midoriya wasn't there.

With a sigh, he trudged down the steps and fell into the seat furthest from everybody else, plonking his rucksack on the chair next to him to save a space for Shinso.

"*HEY SPORTS FANS, ARE YOU READY?!"* Present Mic suddenly exclaimed.

It made Midoriya jump. He pulled his headphones on to block out some of the sound as the crowd erupted into cheers. It was much

louder now he was up close to them.

"*After all the action you've already seen, it's time for the real battles to begin! Can you feel the excitement?!"*

Yes, he could still hear him through his headphones – that's how loud it was. Midoriya felt sorry for all the members of the audience, who had been suffering through this ordeal the entire time.

"*Our competitors are on their own now. Sometimes heroes have only themselves to rely on. Heart, strength, skill, wisdom – courage! They'll have to use all of these things to rise to the top!"*

Midoriya gulped, gazing down at the concrete arena before him. Shinso was down there, standing alone as he waited for the match to begin.

"*And I know it sounds* super *cheesy but remember that it's the taking part that counts! The sheer determination of our competitors is what sets them apart from the others! Those who truly try their very hardest, are the ones who deserve their place in UA's hero course!"*

Midoriya wondered how much of that was directed at him, as he unfolded his strategy sheet once more, his hand struggling to hold his pen steady. This match would be over quickly – no matter *who* came out on top.

"*But you've heard me talk long enough! Let's finally cut to the good stuff and not delay these finals any longer!"*

From each corner of the pitch, columns of flames dramatically erupted, and Midoriya's mentor appeared on the screen facing him. There were a few drones buzzing around the place. One flew to one side of the pitch, and one to the other, zooming in on the two participants of the first battle. The video they caught was shown on the screen next to the one showing Present Mic, so the audience could easily see what was going on, close up or far away.

"Welcome out first fighters!" Present Mic exclaimed, his face disappearing to reveal images of both Jiro and Shinso, and a large *vs* sign between them. *"No way* those *ear plugs get tangled in her pocket! It's Kyoka Jiro from the hero course!"*

The camera panned over to Jiro as she marched confidently into the arena. Midoriya didn't miss the way she twitched her brow when Present Mic made that comment.

"*Verses… Hitoshi Shinso from general studies – who really hasn't done anything to stand out yet.*"

Midoriya's heart was beating so loud that he started considering taking his headphones off so it could be drowned out by the crowd's roar.

"*The rules are simple, immobilise your opponent or force them out of the ring! You can also win by getting the other person to cry uncle!*

"Ready?!

"BEGIN!"

"So, you can just give up, alright?" Shinso glared as soon as Present Mic's *ready* echoed across the stadium.

Jiro pulled a bewildered face at him, but she didn't reply.

"I need this more than you do. Can't you lose for me?"

"BEGIN!"

Jiro scoffed, stepping forwards, about to charge, "Fat chance! You don't –"

Shinso smiled, "And that's it, I win."

She stopped, her earplugs dropping to her side limply as her eyes blanked over.

"*Hey, hey!"* Present Mic called out, "*What's going on here?! The fight has just begun, but Kyoka Jiro is completely frozen! And what's with that look on her face? Could this be a Quirk at work?!"*

Midoriya felt kind of bad for Jiro, but she was already in the hero course. Shinso deserved this win.

"*This is a perfect example of why the entrance exam isn't rational.*"

Midoriya frowned, knocking his headphones off his ears. It was Eraser Head – the last man to get into the hero course through the Sports Festival.

"*Since we're onto the individual matches, I had some information compiled about our final competitors.*"

He gulped – did that mean Mr Aizawa was holding information on Midoriya too?

"*Shinso failed the practical exam to get into the hero course. Since he also applied for general studies, he probably figured that would happen…*"

Eraser Head continued to talk about the entrance exam – about the robots and Shinso's disadvantage. On the screen, Midoriya could see Shinso grit his teeth in frustration, and then finally spit some words at Jiro.

Her starry-eyed expression remained as such as she slowly turned and began to hobble away, dragging her feet as she went.

"*What?! Huh?!*" Present Mic exclaimed melodramatically. "*What's this?! Jiro is obeying him!*"

Midoriya turned to the other members of class 1-C, who continued to gape down at the two competitors with wide eyes.

"Hitoshi Shinso, his Quirk – brainwashing! When his opponent answers a question, it flips a switch in their mind, forcing them to do whatever he says! Not every question does it though – he only brainwashes when he wants to!"

Midoriya blinked up at Present Mic – *oh no*. He explained Shinso's Quirk…

He looked back down at his strategy sheet. Shinso was against Todoroki next. This might not work out quite the way they'd planned.

"I know I said his Quirk seemed creepy as hell," Koneko whispered from the back of class 1-C's stands. "But… that's actually pretty amazing."

Midoriya smiled. It sure was an incredible Quirk.

"*AND JIRO'S WALKED RIGHT OUT OF THE RING!*"

The hero student stopped, blinking, the light returning to her eyes and she glanced frantically around her. She turned on her heel and shouted panickily at Shinso as Midnight exclaimed, “Jiro is out of bounds! Shinso advances to the next match!”

“Come on, guys, let’s congratulate him!” Kisho exclaimed, leaping to his feet. Not everyone followed – even Midoriya, for a moment, because he was so stunned that any of his classmates would actually think to do such a thing. Eventually, he got up too, and ran after the five who had left.

Jiro was ushered back into the ring, and both her and Shinso bowed to in respect as Midoriya and the others rushed out of sight. He caught a glimpse of Jiro’s expression though. She was frustrated, that much was obvious, but her sly smile made Midoriya realise that their budding friendship wasn’t quite over yet – in fact, it was only just beginning.

As Shinso walked down from the stage and towards the exit, Midoriya and the others had made it to the stands right above him. Some of the pro heroes laughed as Matsumoto called out to him, “You were awesome out there, Shinso!”

Ohchi smiled and waved at him, “We’re proud of you!”

“You didn’t tell us you were that good!” added Tachibana.

Kisho laughed, “Yeah, you’re the star of our program!”

“I can’t believe you’ve only used your Quirk once before on Koneko!” said Watanabe, “Where were you when we needed her to shut up, hey?!”

Shinso smiled at them – a real, genuine smile.

Midoriya leaned over the wall so he could definitely see him. [*Look, they don’t think you’re a villain at all*]

“Listen to them!” exclaimed Matsumoto, unaware that Midoriya was talking too.

Midoriya turned to the per heroes behind him, whilst Shinso strained to hear too. He decided to sign their words to make sure Shinso knew what they were saying.

“[With a Quirk like that, it would be very simple to capture dangerous

villains. I wish I had it]"

"[I can't believe they stuck him in general studies. Those idiots.]"

"[Well, there are a ton of applicants each year. I guess sometimes people slip through the cracks.]"

"Shinso, did you get that?!" Matsumoto beamed.

"It's great!" added Watanabe, "They think you're incredible!"

[*Your go next, Canary*] Shinso signed to Midoriya, grinning widely.

"What did he say?" Tachibana questioned Midoriya.

"He can't answer you, idiot!" snapped Ohchi. She turned back to Shinso, "Come on up and talk to us! We'll help you strategize for you next match!"

Midoriya waved at him one last time, and the six of them finally hurried back to their seating area. Shinso reappeared moments later, and they all cheered (well, Midoriya just clapped).

It had been a while since Shinso looked so *happy*. Perhaps the last was when Midoriya spoke to him for the first time.

"*TOO MUCH STANDING AROUND!"*

Midoriya actually yelped at Present Mic's sudden exclamation, which made the rest of his class laugh, as Shinso pushed his bag off the seat next to him and sat down.

"*Now, welcome to the ring – our next players!"*

[*Whoever wins this is your next opponent*] Midoriya reminded Shinso.

"We already know who's going to win."

"*He's got skills, but at the expense of some really creepy elbows. From the hero course, it's Hanta Sero!"*

"Cruel," Kana muttered.

"*Verses, someone who's been front-running this entire competition so far! He's way too strong for his own good, and rightfully got onto the hero course based on recommendations, it's Shouto Todoroki!"*

Midoriya leaned forward, desperate to see as much as possible. Yes, he was pretty sure Todoroki would come out on top. If Shinso was defeated, then there was a possibility that Midoriya would come to face him too. He needed every asset he could get – analysing Todoroki's Quirk was his first step.

"*And now for the second match of the finals, ready?! Begin!"*

The match ended in less than twenty seconds.

Midoriya was very much *not* leaning forward after that. In fact, both he and Shinso had their backs pressed right against their seats in shock, edging away from the bombardment of ice as much as they possibly good.

[*You're going to die*] Midoriya slowly signed.

Shinso didn't reply.

"Sero has been immobilised; Todoroki advances to the second round," Midnight announced.

There was no cheer at first, everyone was (and, in some cases, rather literally) frozen.

As some of the audience started yelling *nice try* to Todoroki's victim, Midoriya leant around the ice to see…

Todoroki begin to melt it.

So, he was right – Todoroki *could* use fire.

It would make sense, as the son of the flame hero, Endeavor, for him to have such a power. Everything about Todoroki seemed to scream that he had a duel ability, half hot, half cold. And the ice, it only covered the left side of Todoroki's body now he had used it. Yes, an equal split down his middle, like his hair and eyes and – that *scar*…

Something was wrong here – very wrong. Why hadn't Todoroki used his fire offensively? Or… even *defensively*. It could have been such a huge asset in the previous rounds.

Midoriya bit his lip as Present Mic announced that they would have to take a short break as they removed the sheer *volume* of ice. But after that…

[*You're up*] Shinso signed, Midoriya could see his hand movements in

his peripheral vision.

But he just couldn't take his eyes away from Todoroki. For some reason, in that moment, he just looked so… so sad to him. And Midoriya knew what that felt like.

He had to do this. He had to beat Kaminari – and then whoever came out on top of Iida's and Hatsume's match too. If Todoroki defeated Shinso, then Midoriya *had* to be the person to fight him next. He just wanted to help him, somehow. Midoriya had never been very good with words… but… maybe things were different now.

"G-Good luck, Midoriya," stammered Ohchi as he got to his feet, struggling to get past the ice that had obstructed his way out.

"Yeah, good luck," repeated Matsumoto

He nodded at them, and slowly made his way down from the stands. There was no need to hurry.

He took a deep breath as he stood waiting in the corridor before the stadium. The air was cold.

Midoriya untangled the wire hanging from his headphones, and then rearranged the device that had been hiding beneath his shirt for the beginning of the Sports Festival. Strapping it on top of the fabric, he turned it on, and flicked through his arsenal for the one he had prepared for – the song he was so thankful for – one of the ones which started it all.

He listened to it far too many times before he heard Present Mic's voice ring out, halfway through his song.

"*WELCOME BACK TO THE FINALS EVERYONE! Sorry for that long wait!"*

Midoriya gulped again. He had been thinking, and no – he wouldn't activate his microphone the first time around. One step at a time.

"The insane amount of ice –"

Tweet, tweet!

"Siren!" Midoriya exclaimed, turning on his heel to see the canary, sitting before the small pile of cloth that was the headband which she refused to give back. "What are you doing here?!"

Tweet!

"I-I have to go on now – and no, you can't help me this time. I have to do this alone. The only match you're allowed to help with is Koda's… but be careful with that…"

Chirp.

"Y-You have to stay here and wait until I get back – or go and see Shinso, ok?" Midoriya insisted, making sure his headphones were fastened securely around his neck. He wasn't going to be wearing them this time around – he didn't need the music… he didn't need the power to last long or be that strong. He'd practised this particular ability enough for it to activate quickly and for him to be good at controlling it. But he had his playlist ready, just in case something went wrong.

"*–It's time to welcome new competitors!"*

"See you soon, ok?" Midoriya said to Siren, and then with one final, deep breath, he stepped out into the arena.

"*It's the boy with the electric personality, Denki Kaminari from the hero course, class 1-A!"* Present Mic exclaimed as Midoriya's opponent stepped up onto the pitch, smiling confidently. *"Verses, our resident genius, with some of the highest scores in UA history on our theoretical papers, it's Izuku Midoriya from general studies, class 1-C!"*

"Like I said, it'll be over in two seconds!" Kaminari exclaimed, giving Midoriya a thumbs up as he reached the top of the stairs to the raised stage.

This was it – he was finally here.

"*Ready?!"*

Like Shinso said – it was time for him to make his mark, and go beyond –

"*BEGIN!"*

– plus ultra!

Chapter End Notes

Ok, so you know what I said about cliff hangers…

…

…*whoops.*

Thanks to **JusTaFictioN** for helping me figure out how pictures work in archive!

Canary: Rising

Chapter Notes

Hope and pray that there isn't a YouTube advert.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Like I said, it'll be over in two seconds!" insisted Kaminari, brimming with confidence and an easy smile.

"*Ready?!"* Present Mic's voice boomed

Midoriya could feel his heart thumping manically within his chest. He assumed a position similar to that of someone beginning a race, his eyes focused and mind determined. This would all be a matter of timing.

"*BEGIN!"*

Kaminari raised his hands in the air, buzzing with growing static, "Sorry about this!"

It all happened very quickly. As electricity spread quickly towards Midoriya, he took two big steps forward, and leapt into the air.

~Wings – Hurts~

"*WRAP YOUR WINGS AROUND–"*

And he took to the sky, the familiar feeling of his wings spreading out behind him as he shot straight upwards, the wind ruffling his feathers and blowing the hair from his face.

"*Wrap your wings, wrap your wings…"* he sang.

The stadium was far below him now – he'd gotten a little carried away.

Spreading his wingspan to its fullest extent, he came to a halt just before a camera drone, set to hover way above the arena, likely to film attacks like Todoroki's from earlier.

He smiled widely at it, before snapping his wings closed and plummeting back towards the Earth.

Oh, how Midoriya loved to fly.

Midoriya was still singing, almost humming, as he heard the yells and screams of the crowd around him – Present Mic hadn't said anything yet.

He got rather close to the ground before he threw open his wingspan once more, catching himself in the air to rocket towards Kaminari. A beat of Midoriya's wings sent a gust blowing his opponent's hair from his face as Midoriya's feet touched the ground. He was now standing right in front of Kaminari. But he made no flinch, nor movement to indicate a further fight. He looked rather frazzled as he swayed side to side.

Midoriya stopped singing. He was breathing heavily – adrenaline still rushing through his veins from the thrill that a flight always gave him. His wings remained still; spread out widely either side of him.

Midoriya smiled – he had been *right*. Kaminari had overused his Quirk – and he now stood before him, completely short-circuited.

Cautiously, Midoriya tapped his forehead. He got the slightest static shock, but nothing more. With further confidence, he grasped Kaminari's shoulders, twisted him around, and pushed him towards the edge of the arena.

As Kaminari tripped over his own feet and faceplanted the concrete on the other side of the boarder line, Midoriya was dragged back to reality with an ear piecing yell.

"*YYYEEEAAAHHH!"* Present Mic screamed.

Midoriya just grimaced at Kaminari's fallen form as the sound rang out.

"Kaminari is out of bounds; Midoriya advances to the next round!" Midnight exclaimed, unable to suppress the smile on her face as she announced as such.

“A-Are you ok?!” Midoriya stammered nervously, pulling Kaminari back to his feet; almost hitting him on the head with one of his wings in the process.

“Yee…” the electric boy replied in a dazed expression.

There was a robotic stretcher which arrived to take Kaminari away to Recovery Girl, perhaps in hope that she could do something about his Quirk over usage, or at least give him a place to recovery quietly.

“*Wait, I don’t understand, my information –”* Midoriya heard Eraser Head protest. Added to the sound of rustling paper, it was clear that he was glancing through his compiled information in utter bewilderment.

“*Your information’s out of date!”* Present Mic replied enthusiastically.

Realising he was still standing in the middle of the Sports Festival arena, Midoriya decided this was as good a time as any to make his move and run as quickly as he could back towards the exit.

“*Izuku Midoriya! His Quirk, Living Melody!”* continued Midoriya’s teacher. “*When he sings a song, it can give him a specialised powerup that lasts the duration of his singing! Isn’t that cool?!”*

His wings were definitely falling apart now, sending fading, green feathers drifting away behind him as Midoriya hurried towards the steps down from the raised pitch.

“*HEY CANARY!”*

Midoriya, in surprise, stumbled and fell down the stairs, he was forced to do a flip to avoid slamming his head into the hard concrete. He landed expertly and turned to glare at Present Mic’s commentary box.

“*WE WANT TO HEAR YOU SING NEXT TIME!”*

Midoriya wavered, before grinning sheepishly at him and then continuing to hurry towards the exit, where Siren sat waiting for him dutifully, singing merrily herself.

“DON’T YOU WALK AWAY FROM ME!”

Class 1-A *stared*.

Of course, a good proportion of them had already encountered Midoriya at one point or another. Whether it was because they new the truth, or because they'd met him during lunch period or heard Uraraka speaking out about the timid, Quirkless boy in general studies.

Mina was the first to break the silence.

"B-But… *WHAT?!"* she cried, pulling at her horns. "T-There's no *way* – Midoriya can't *possibly* be –"

"Wait, isn't that the same guy from outside our class the other day?" frowned Sato. "The one who tried pushing that brainwashing dude out of the way?"

"URARAKA!" Mina yelled. "*How dare you keep this from us?"*

She just laughed, "I only figured it out, like, a week ago!"

"To be fair, he's not very good at keeping secrets, despite hardly being able to talk," Jiro smirked.

"YOU KNEW TOO?!"

"She figured it out before me," Uraraka laughed sheepishly. "And then we told Iida before he could listen to the radio and recognise Midoriya's voice."

"WAIT!" Mina had leapt to her feet now, standing on her chair to gaze at them all, awestruck, "He *talks* to you?!"

"He doesn't *lack* the ability to speak," Jiro rolled her eyes, "he's *selectively* mute."

"So, what? He *chooses* to be mute to me but not you lot?!"

"Don't you think that is rather disrespectful, Ashido?!" exclaimed Iida. "Besides, I fail to recall a situation where the two of you have even had the chance to converse!"

"I go to the same *dance class* as him!" she protested, putting her hands on her hips.

"Now who's keeping secrets?" gaped Sero. He'd only just returned from Recovery Girl's after being frozen solid by Todoroki. "You and

Canary go to the same dance class?"

"Well I didn't *know that*, did I?!"

"Wait, is the secret the fact that Mina goes to dance class or the fact that Midoriya also goes to a dance class?" frowned Uraraka.

"Um, both?" Sero replied.

"Shouldn't we be freaking out over the fact that *Canary is right there?!"* Mina cried, "And we *know* him?! He could be our future classmate!"

"Anything's better than Mineta," Yaoyorozu sighed.

Iida had left at this point, ready for his match against that freaky support class girl.

Speaking of which –

"Oh my God – we're going to have to *fight* him!" Mina suddenly realised, collapsing back into her seat beside Momo.

"I don't get it, what's his Quirk?" Kirishima sighed. "Present Mic didn't explain it very well."

"Has he talked to you guys about it?" Mina questioned, turning to Jiro, who was sitting directly behind her.

"Not really," she replied. "You don't just get over being mute all of a sudden – he takes a while to warm up to you."

"We started talking about Quirks," Uraraka remembered, "Oh! But then I stopped him in case we ended up facing each other in the Sports Festival," she moaned.

Mina groaned loudly. "I guess we'll just have to watch his next match carefully..."

"Isn't your fight after this one?" pointed out Tsuyu.

"Oh, right!" Mina exclaimed, jumping to her feet and swivelling around to grin menacingly at Koda. "I bet that bird didn't hang around long, huh?!"

Koda blinked at her, and then whispered in that squeaky voice of his, "Actually… That was Canary's bird."

"…Oh no."

Scooping Siren off the ground (the more-than-ten-million-points headband had disappeared at this point, likely stashed away somewhere secret), Midoriya finally hurried around a corner and disappeared from view. Only then could he truly appreciate what had just happened.

With wide eyes and a heavily beating heart, he leant against the wall and sank to the floor.

"I did it," he breathed, staring down at Siren, "I-I actually did it!"

Tweet, tweet! she exclaimed, actually hopping up and down in his hands.

He actually… felt rather sick. He could feel the acid creeping up the back of his throat. "Oh my God – I did it."

Now everyone knew.

Everyone.

Midoriya could still hear Present Mic as he confirmed that yes, that was Canary, and no, he wasn't Quirkless. Eraser Head's information really was out of date. But none of the words processed in Midoriya's mind. All he could focus on was the blurred image of Siren as his breathing grew faster and faster and a ringing filled his head.

Chirp!

Midoriya blinked, eyes focusing in on Siren's tiny body properly again.

Tweet, tweet!

"Thank you, Siren," he choked, his voice once more returning to barely a whisper.

He sat there for a while, thinking. Siren soon decided that his hands weren't a good enough perch and flew back up to his head to nestle under his locks.

What was he thinking about? Well, not much. Perhaps it was just the solitariness that he was enjoying.

“Ok, so, the world knows now. They know who I am,” Midoriya told Siren. He was just staring at the wall now, knowing his bird was happily nestled on top of his head. “Then again… they kind of already knew? The only different now is that they know my name and what I look like – Oh, and my Quirk too, I guess. That bit’s not that bad… right?”

Cheep, cheep!

“Right. But, um, yeah, it’s the people who knew *me* – not Canary – that I’m worried about… W-What will they *say?* What will they –”

“Midoriya?”

He flinched dramatically, although Siren still managed to cling on as Midoriya scrambled to his feet. “H-Hi, I-Iida,” he stammered.

“Are you ok?” Iida frowned.

“O-Oh yeah… just… thinking…” Midoriya replied awkwardly, kicking at the ground.

“Well, you did very well in that match, let me be the first to say congratulations,” he grinned.

“T-Thanks… a-and, sorry about s-stealing your t-team’s headband back t-then,” Midoriya added, pointing to Siren, who had been rather camouflaged against his hair.

“Oh, I see, is that your canary?” Iida frowned, adjusting his… what is *that?*

“Yeah, um…” Midoriya grimaced, “Iida, what are you wearing?”

“Ah yes, you remember Hatsume from your cavalry battle team?” Iida began to explain.

Midoriya fiddled with the headphones hanging around his neck, ‘*Oh no, poor Iida.’*

“Well, she has requested of me to wear some of her inventions in order to keep the fight fair and promote them in the process!” he announced happily, clearly quite pleased with his decision of helping Hatsume.

Midoriya gulped, “G-Good luck then.”

“And to you,” Iida returned, holding out his hand for Midoriya to shake, which he did. “If I win this, I will be facing you next.”

Midoriya hastily pulled his hand away, “Ah, right yes – I-I’ll see y-you then… then…”

Iida nodded and turned to walk towards the entrance to the arena.

Midoriya stood there in silence for a moment longer. Only when Present Mic’s voice boomed through the speakers, announcing the next match, did Midoriya begin to scamper his way up the stairs and back towards his seat.

He hesitated at the top of the stairs. He was on the other side of the arena this time, so, thankfully, he wouldn’t have to walk past the backs of the hero course students. However, it *did* mean he had to hurry past all the *other* classes.

Midoriya pulled his headphones back over his head, being careful not to squash Siren in the process, and he walked at a brisk pace down the corridor along the seating arrangements.

He was thankful to Hatsume, in… several ways… Firstly, for helping him make sure his headphones were at least remotely soundproof, and secondly, for being such a good distraction for the crowd and the other first year students, so Midoriya could theoretically hurry past without many noticing. Unfortunately, this plan was not a complete success.

“Hey, isn’t that Canary?”

Midoriya pretended not to hear them.

“Canary! Oh my gosh, it’s *him!”*

“I can’t believe he’s been hiding out amongst us for all this time.”

“Didn’t Present Mic say he was like, some super genius or something?”

“Do you think he’d give me his autograph if I asked?”

He almost missed the entrance to his class’ seating area in his haste.

No one noticed him at first. Some, optimistic, glimmer of hope at the back of his mind said that perhaps they would respect his boundaries.

Smile and wave encouragingly at him, but just leave him be as he went to take his place beside Shinso, who currently had his hand over his face in disbelief as he barely watched Iida's and Hatsume's fight, which had just become a commercial for her gadgets at this point.

It was Koneko, with her cat-like senses, who picked up on Midoriya's presence first. She did a double take, before gasping and turning around in her chair to gaze at him with stars in her eyes. "Midoriya!" she exclaimed, causing the rest of their class to take notice to him too. "You're *Canary!"*

Midoriya didn't say anything, only tensing his shoulders nervously as he wished that his wings had never faded, so he could take to the skies, never to be seen again.

In the meantime, his class had suddenly leapt to their feet, scrambling out of the rows of chairs to surround him, wide smiles crossing their faces.

"I can't believe it!" exclaimed Matsumoto.

"Dude, you were *amazing!"* said Tachibana.

Koneko was bouncing up and down, "Seriously! Why didn't you tell us?! This is the coolest thing *ever!"*

"Hey, do you think you could sign something for me, so I can show my friends out of school?" questioned Kana.

Midoriya blamed Shinso for his brief moment of sass, when he then used sign language to say, [*I'd rather not*]

Kana just blinked at him, completely missing the joke as Midoriya heard Shinso snigger distantly.

"This makes, like, *no* sense," Koneko scoffed, turning to her classmates, a few of which nodded dumbfoundedly in agreement, "You're Quirkless!"

"And mute," Midoriya snapped, before slamming his hand over his mouth in surprise. He hadn't planned on that word tumbling out into reality. Gosh, things were awfully difficult with speaking. It was like he had a faucet which he couldn't control in terms of turning on and off, so it spewed water out everywhere at the unlikeliest of times.

Shinso grinned back at him, through a gap in the crowd around

Midoriya, with that sadistic look of his.

“P-Put that in the p-past tense a-and you’d be correct,” Midoriya added, completely astounded by himself.

Still rather desperate to get out of this situation, Midoriya started to push through the crowd, down towards Shinso, but he was quickly halted by Ohchi, who had grasped onto his wrist as he passed by.

“You can talk!” she realised, a wide grin spreading across her face. “How long have you been able to –”

“Leave him alone,” Shinso interjected, still not getting up, but his smile had quickly faded.

A short-lived silence fell between them, filled only by the excitable cries of Hatsume down in the arena.

“So, what, you just don’t want to talk to us or something?” asked Kojima, who rarely spoke to any of his classmates anyway – the hypocrite.

Midoriya’s eyes widened in fright and he frantically shook his head.

“Talk to us then!” added Koneko, as curious as ever, despite the fact that Midoriya had already reached an all-time high in his word count towards them

Shinso actually did get up now, ready to properly intervene as Midoriya opened his mouth to reply.

“I-I-I…” he stammered, chocking on even such a simple word. All of a sudden, that mental shutter slammed shut between his mind and his mouth as he began to panic about what his disappointed classmates could possibly be thinking. And suddenly it was hard to breathe – that feeling of bile rising up the back of his throat returned. He held his hands over his neck, tears pricking at the corner of his eyes in utter frustration of falling at such a *pathetic* social hurdle.

Tweet, tweet!

And the bird hopped down from the very top of his head. Grasping into a particularly long strand of hair, Siren hung down so that her face was right before Midoriya’s.

“S-Sorry,” Midoriya breathed, focusing all his attention on Siren’s

beady eyes, “I don’t… words…”

Swiftly, Shinso was there, pulling one of Midoriya’s hands away from his throat and leading him down the stairs by his wrist.

“Who do you think will win then?” Shinso questioned as he pushed Midoriya down into his seat, ignoring the worried stares of their classmates.

Midoriya’s eyes slowly drifted from Siren’s form, now hovering beside him, back towards the arena. “Iida.”

“Iida? But Hatsume has complete control of him,” Shinso scoffed, “Has this entire time.”

“She…” Midoriya furrowed his brow. What was *wrong* with him? It had never been like this before… Perhaps he should just fall back to sign language again – that would make things easier, right? But… he needed the practise. It was ok – he was just talking to Shinso… “She d-doesn’t want to advance.”

Shinso smiled at him, pulling out their strategy sheet. Midoriya had always been sure Iida would come out on top. “Surely it would be better for her if she went on to *win* the Sports Festival with her creations?”

“She won’t. C-Can’t – but Iida… could.”

“Yeah? But why would that be good for her?”

Midoriya took another deep breath and gazed down at Hatsume as she bragged about her many *babies*. “Because if she shows that she is more than capable of defeating Iida, and then Iida goes on to win the festival, what does that say about her? It will more efficiently showcase her capabilities without having to risk losing, or further damaging her gadgets.”

Shinso frowned, “Are you sure that’s what her plan is?”

“No. Absolutely not. She probably just wants to use this as an advertisement and has no need to do anything more beyond that.”

“Wait, wait, wait – I don’t get it – did you like, lie about being Quirkless or something?” Koneko interjected from the back of the stands, pouting with her hands on her hips; her tail twitching in irritation.

As Midoriya tensed up, Shinso turned around and glared daggers at her, after a brief glance towards Watanabe, he said, “Can you do us all a favour and, for once in your life, shut up?”

The girl gaped at him, clearly offended, her eyes flicking between Shinso and Midoriya, who was vaguely watching the exchange out of the corner of his eye. “Hey, I’m just –”

She fell silent when Shinso activated his Quirk. No one dared continue the conversation after that, and they slowly but surely, filed back to their seats.

“Err, Hatsume stepped out of bounds,” Midnight’s voice rang out over the rather bewildered stadium as Hatsume’s *advertisement* finally came to a close. “So, Iida advances to the next round.”

“Koda’s next,” Shinso realised as the audience cheered, possibly in relief that it was over.

“Oh, right!” Midoriya exclaimed, ‘*Oh… that was loud…*’ he realised, gingerly placing a hand over his mouth and glancing nervously at Shinso, who just smirked and shook his head in disbelief.

“They’re probably going to want to move onto the next round pretty quickly because of how long Hatsume and Iida took,” Shinso realised.

He was quickly proved right, and the thoughts of Midoriya’s troubles melted away as Present Mic finally announced the beginning of the next match.

“*UP NEXT, LET’S HOPE WE FINALLY GET A SUPER FLASHY FIGHT!”* he exclaimed. “*It’s a big guy with a big heart, Kouji Koda from the hero course – verses – is there a purpose to the horns on her head? It’s Mina Ashido, from the same class!”*

Midoriya grasped Siren from the air and then leant over the wall before him, holding Siren out towards the pitch where Mina had just started defying all the laws of physics by skating forwards on her acid, a determined look on her face.

“Go help Koda, but be careful,” Midoriya insisted.

“*WHAT’S THIS?!”* Present Mic exclaimed, “*Looks like Koda’s taking advantage of the only animal not frightened of the noise we’re making!”*

The camera panned to Midoriya, stretching his arms across the wall as

Siren puffed out her chest, before leaping off his hands and soaring down towards Koda and Mina.

Koda seemed a little stunned as Siren started dive bombing Mina of her own accord, rather than taking an order from him. Midoriya just mimicked Shinso's grin from a distance as Siren did her bit.

It wasn't the *flashy* battle that Present Mic had perhaps been hoping for.

Mina seemed far more frightened of Siren than she was of her. But she was still sure not to use acid that could hurt her as she skated back and forth, desperately trying to get past Siren's defences to reach Koda, who had now sucked up the courage to instruct Siren's movements. Whether she was actually listening to them or not, was a completely different argument.

In the end, Midoriya had been right in assuming that Koda would not come out on top. He kept backing away from his ever-approaching opponent until eventually, he was forced to step out of the arena to avoid the puddles of acid, creeping in his direction.

Siren seemed to enjoy herself, at the least.

The next round, however, did not go quite as Midoriya had expected. Mainly because he had no idea what this *dark shadow* was truly capable of! Shinso just smiled at him and sighed as Midoriya pulled another notebook from his back and excitably started to jot down as many notes as he could on one small piece of paper.

Midoriya had all but forgotten about his earlier panic as he was drawn into the spectaculars of the festival. It was, in fact, only about halfway through Kirishima's and Tetsutetsu's drawn out fight when something finally caught his eye.

"I'll see you in a bit," Midoriya whispered to Shinso, grasping the notebook he'd been jotting Quirk logistics in and hurrying from his seat.

"Where are you going?" Shinso called out in reply, but Midoriya had already turned the corner before he had the chance to answer.

"Uraraka!" Midoriya called out, waving as he hurried after her.

"Hi, Canary," she smiled, "You did great out there! So confident!" she insisted, punching the sky eagerly as she paused to talk with him. But

her bubbly attitude seemed… so much more forced than usual.

“H-Have you g-got a strategy for y-your fight?” Midoriya questioned. He was acutely aware of the whispers and stares thrown in his direction by the other first years, but he tried his hardest to ignore them. Uraraka seemed less bothered.

She didn’t answer immediately, but after a moment’s thought she clenched her fists and nodded surely. “Yeah – yeah, I know what I need to do… It’s just… Oh, you wouldn’t know,” she sighed, fussing with her hair as they slowly began to walk towards the stairs. “The guy I’m up against, Bakugo – he’s one of the best in our class. I thought I’d be able to do a little better than flunking in the first round.”

“You really don’t have to come with me,” Uraraka smiled. “I’ll be fine, don’t worry.”

“O-Oh, it’s just… well, I-I thought that, if you h-hadn’t come up with a plan, that I could –” he cut himself off.

Uraraka turned to follow Midoriya’s gaze.

“Oh! Hi, Bakugo – good luck out there,” she smiled forcefully.

But Kacchan didn’t seem to care about *her*.

“The hell was that?” he snarled after a moment, curling the top of his lip and narrowing his eyes at Midoriya.

“What?” said Uraraka, confused as she glanced between the two boys.

Kacchan continued to ignore her completely as he stared Midoriya down. “You. Don’t. *Have*. A Quirk,” he growled.

It was Kacchan – Kacchan was speaking to him – expecting him to speak back! It had been so long since Midoriya *dared* to utter a sound before his childhood friend. It was one of the reasons he fell silent in the first place… actually…

He stopped shaking; curling into himself in a primordial instinct to make himself appear smaller. And that feeling of unrivalled fear was replaced with that hot, molten lump of an emotion that had been slowly building inside his gut for so long – *anger*. All of this was *Kacchan’s* fault.

If it weren't for him – none of this would have ever happened.

He's the reason he gave up on his dreams – the reason he stopped talking – and thus the reason he never found his Quirk. If it weren't for him – Midoriya could already *be* in the hero course – he wouldn't have to suffer through the pains his mind supplied, or the stress in the build up to the Sports Festival – or… or the radio station… or Siren's little tantrums or even Shinso's Quirk problems. He would have missed it all.

"I do," Midoriya whispered, his eyes slowly drifting up to meet his. "I do have a Quirk, and you'd be happy to know that I didn't have to take a swan dive to find it."

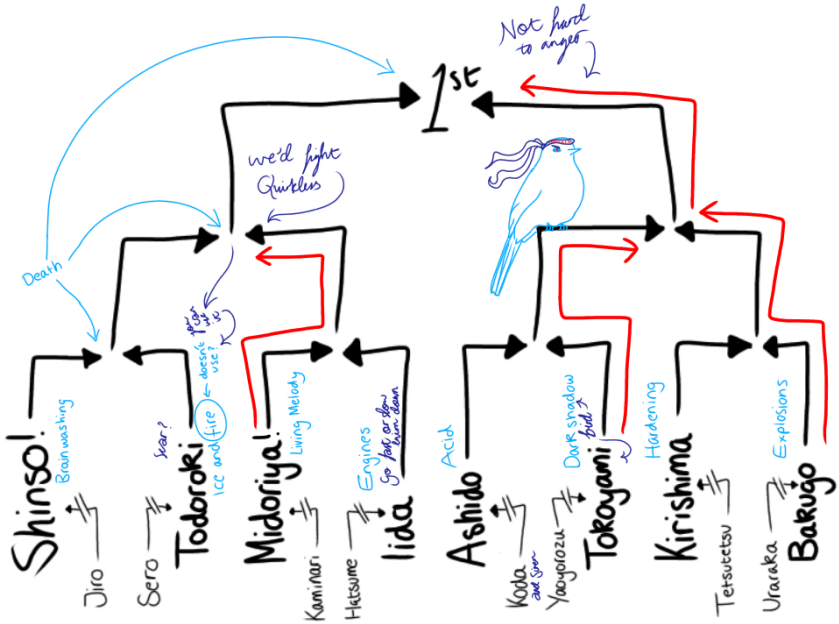
Uraraka looked like she felt increasingly out of place.

"And I-I'd also like to thank you," Midoriya added, standing up tall and trying his hardest to suppress the quiver that continue to wrack his nerves, "If it weren't for you. None of this ever would have happened."

And with that, he turned on his heel to march away, before hesitating, tilting his head and saying, "Good luck – both of you. I hope to see you in the finals."

He hoped he'd left that ambiguous enough. Of course, he'd rather Uraraka would win out of the two. But… it was about time he stopped cowering into the shadows – and started fighting back.

"What do you think will get him talking?" Shinso questioned. He and Midoriya were sitting in one of the waiting rooms, staring blankly at their new strategy sheet, now the second round had finally been decided upon.



Midoriya was absentmindedly drawing another bird as he stared at the name *Bakugo* at the bottom of the piece of paper. He'd defeated Uraraka. He'd gotten better since Midoriya last saw him – but that had been expected, of course. And now the prospect of facing him was becoming ever more realistic – Midoriya wasn't too sure how he felt about it.

"Midoriya?" said Shinso, grabbing his attention again.

Shinso's match against Todoroki would start any minute now – after they'd decided who would proceed to the next round out of Kirishima and Tetsutetsu. Midoriya had already decided that it would be Kirishima.

"R-Right," Midoriya stammered. "U-Um… a-anything to frustrate him enough to speak, I suppose."

"Perhaps his scar," Shinso pondered, jotting a note down above Todoroki's name.

Midoriya pouted. He wasn't fond Shinso's method of getting people to talk. "H-How about a *joke?*"

Shinso gave him a look.

“W-What?! I-It would *work*. Y-You could m-make him laugh!”

He sighed, “First of all, do I look like the kind of guy that would be good at jokes? And secondly, does *Todoroki* look like the kind of guy who would *like* jokes?”

Midoriya wavered, “I suppose…”

“I get that Present Mic needed to announce our Quirks to even the playing field and explain what’s going on to the audience and heroes and stuff but…” he leant back in his chair, running his hands through in hair in frustration, “I have less of a shot of beating him without that detail – wait, what is that?”

“All the possibilities for death,” Midoriya explained, drawing arrows to a few of the matches, specifically, every single one Shinso took part in. He was quick to point that out.

“So, you don’t think there’s any chance of you getting hurt in *your* next match then, huh?” Shinso pondered.

“Well… I have an idea.”

“Oh, do you? Is it from my suggestion?”

“Well, the thing is – I never ended up finding a song that could slow someone down like that… I guess I could speed myself up. But I have a different strategy.”

Shinso faltered, clearly trying to think about what that strategy could possibly be as he continued to doodle on their brackets, “Well, I guess I’ll have to wait and see.”

Midoriya sighed, “Do you always have to sabotage my drawings?” he asked as he stared his bird doodle, which now had red eyes and sported the ten-million-six-hundred-and-fifteen-point headband.

“Yes,” he answered, without hesitation this time. He then put the lid on his pen and flicked it so it rolled across the table towards Midoriya. “Go up to the stands and I’ll see you in a bit,” he finished, getting to his feet and scraping his chair back.

Midoriya leapt to his feet and held out a hand for Shinso to shake, “It was nice knowing you.”

Shinso failed to contain his laughter as he shook Midoriya’s hand.

“You too,” he replied. “If I don’t win – you have to incinerate him for me, ok?”

“I-I’ll try my best.”

He smiled broadly, and with that, his rather skeletal friend gave him a mock salute and disappeared down the corridor, ready to meet Todoroki on the battlefield.

Midoriya didn’t hesitate to pack up his pens and paper and run back to his seat. However, he didn’t get very far before –

“CANARY!”

‘Oh, no – not again…’

Midoriya jumped several meters backwards as Mina tried to throw herself at him for a hug.

“AH! That was *so* cool!” she exclaimed, completely overlooking the fact that Midoriya had intentionally avoided her touch.

Midoriya smiled meekly and started backing away.

“Like, oh my *God!* I can’t believe all that time we were talking about Canary in dance class and –”

“*Mina!”* Midoriya exclaimed in a hushed voice, “Y-You d-didn’t t-tell anyone about t-that d-did you?”

“About dance?” she frowned, cocking her head to one side, “And *AHHHHH!* You talked oh my God!”

“T-That was a secret,” he blinked at her, unbelieving that she’d dare give out the only thing he trusted her with.

“Your talking?”

“N-No…”

“*Oh…* Sorry – I thought that, well, considering that now everyone knows you’re *Canary* that you wouldn’t mind – I’m really sorry though!” she insisted.

Midoriya let his shoulders relax with a sigh. He supposed it wasn’t that big of a deal anymore anyway…

"*IT'S THE FIRST MATCH OF THE SECOND ROUND!"*

Midoriya flinched – *Shinso!* "I-I have to go," he insisted, and ran off without waiting for a reply.

Mina instead simply yelped as Siren reappeared and whizzed past her to follow Midoriya back to his seat, desperate to witness the fight. For whoever won, would be fighting whoever came out on top of *Midoriya's* match.

"*It's the seemingly unstoppable force that's been frontrunning this entire competition, Shouto Todoroki! Verses, the underdog with a pretty terrifying Quirk – Hitoshi Shinso!"*

"What do you hope to achieve by winning this festival, son of Endeavor?" Shinso snarled.

His opponent simply narrowed his eyes at him, making no attempt to speak.

"*READY?!"*

"All you'll do is win and show the world that you're just an upgraded version of your father! What about people like me? People like Canary?! We need this so much more!"

"BEGIN!"

Todoroki slammed his foot forward and the ice began to creep along the floor towards Shinso.

"DON'T YOU HEAR ME, SCAR FACE?! WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO LOSE COMPARED TO ME?!"

But he didn't reply.

And the ice surrounded him. It shot straight upwards, covering every muscle in an instant.

"Shinso is unable to move. Todoroki wins!"

Tears pricked at Shinso's eyes as he gazed up at the stands. He could

see Midoriya standing there. His headphones were on, face determined. He gave him a nod and disappeared.

Teeth gritted in frustration, Shinso glared at Todoroki as he put a hand on Shinso's chest, warmth spreading out from it as he was thawed from his icy prison.

"I have *nothing*," Shinso snarled. "I've started from the very bottom of this hell-hole of a society. Know that Canary has too – and he will beat you for me. Then I hope you'll look forward to seeing those places filled in your godforsaken class – because we'll be taking them."

But no words left his mouth. He didn't even meet Shinso's eyes.

Just like it had always been –

– nothing ever changes.

Except, perhaps, for Midoriya.

Midoriya cracked his knuckles as he waited by the entrance to the arena. He was more determined than ever to win this – or at least get past this match.

He *needed* this.

"*NEXT UP! We have another young hero following the footsteps of a family legacy – Tenya Iida!"*

Midoriya wasn't hanging around. He needed this song to be as powerful as possible – and no one said anything about him not being able to start singing before the match started…

~Lullaby – Paloma Faith & Sigala~

The music began to play through his headphones, pulling Midoriya to a reality far from the one he was standing in, where he marched out

into the stadium, muttering the lyrics as quietly as he could as he went – vaguely hearing Present Mic's voice echo through.

"*No journey is too far for the one who healed my scars –"*

"*VERSES! Our rising radio star – Canary! It's Izuku Midoriya!"*

"*–let me hold you…"*

He reached the stairs, deaf to the screams and cheers of the audience as he paraded up towards his fate, walking in time to the beat.

"Good luck, Midoriya," was what he was sure Iida had said as he nodded towards him.

"*READY?!"*

"Somebody out there –"

Midoriya smiled, nodded in return, and reached up to tap the button on the side of his headphones that had been collecting dust this whole time – the speakers activated – his microphone extending forwards from the device –

"*BEGIN!"*

– and he set his voice free.

"*Won't you sing me your sweet lullaby?!"*

He slid to his left as Iida charged forwards, missing him by inches – and Midoriya couldn't help but smile.

"*–the sound of your voice is the thing that I need!"*

Iida turned around at a remarkable velocity and sped towards him once more. Midoriya flipped this time, leaping right over his head and rolling to a stop on the ground, before scrambling to his feet and darting out of Iida's path with startling agility, even for him. He supposed people knowing about his dance classes really *wasn't* that much of a leap from what he could already do…

"'*Cause I just need your song!"*

Jump.

"*Something to sing along!"*

Dodge.

"*When I'm not –"*

Flip!

Midoriya was *beaming* – literally dancing with the enemy, who was unable to lay a finger on him as he leapt from side to side.

But he could see the determination growing on Iida's face – he'd use that super move of his in a moment – he'd been stalling, unsure of what Midoriya would do – come on, just a little longer…!

And as Iida went full throttle, speeding towards him like a juggernaut as Midoriya braced himself for an inevitable defeat –

"*– So, sing to me!"*

– Midoriya's Quirk overcame him.

He stopped singing as he Iida's eyes rolled to the back of his head, plummeting towards the ground before Midoriya.

He lunged forwards and grasped the back of Iida's shirt, suspending him millimetres from the ground and saving his glasses, which barely remaining hanging off the bridge of his nose.

"Well played… Midoriya…" Iida moaned as Midoriya pushed his headphones from his head, so they dangled down over his shoulders.

He began to drag him across the arena to the edge as the crowd roared.

"Why…am I so… tired…?" Iida barely managed.

"Interesting, isn't it?" Midoriya replied as he pushed him over the line. "It gets more and more powerful, every time I use it."

"Iida is out of bounds! Midoriya advances to the next round!" Midnight cried

"*YYYEEEAAAHHH CANARRYYYY!"* Present Mic cried as Midoriya crouched down beside Iida, trying to help him up.

"*Aren't you supposed to be unbiased?"* Eraser Head groaned.

"How… long does this last?" Iida mumbled as the robotic stretcher

arrived.

“Err… yeah, I practise that one a lot so…” Midoriya tried to explain. “Um, well – it’ll wear off soon, don’t worry – and I’m really sorry about –”

“Don’t be sorry about… being… winning…” Iida slurred as Midoriya lifted his legs up onto the stretcher. And with that, he passed out.

Shinso grinned.

He’d changed into a spare set of UA’s regulatory sports uniform, because his own one was freezing cold and soaking wet. But that didn’t matter at the moment.

Canary had been victorious.

Midoriya smiled and waved at him as he hurried across the pitch and back towards the stairs to sit beside him in the stands for the next match.

Shinso’s gaze drifted to the teachers’ stands – where they sat, watching their students compete. If they let one of them into the hero course, then, like Midoriya had once pointed out to him, they *surely* had to contemplate the other as well, especially considering there were *two* spaces free in class 1-A.

Sure, Shinso was out – but that didn’t mean it was over for him yet.

Inko’s neighbours were probably becoming rather concerned at this point.

She was surprised she had enough tears to fell the constant need to ball her eyes out as she watched the Sports Festival through blurry eyes and the frequent tissues she held across her running nose.

Her baby was *singing* – and *dancing* and he was *smiling*.

It didn't even matter if he won or not.

He had become a winner in her eyes ever since he uttered his first word.

Chapter End Notes

I've just realised how long this fic is going to be??? So… sorry in advance…

Songs used in this chapter:
Wings – Hurts
https://youtu.be/PedE5IZ7DfE?t=112

Lullaby – Paloma Faith / Sigala – Cover by Sam Biggs
https://youtu.be/y_ixD4Yf0PM?t=70

The links in this chapter start the songs at specific points! So, be careful when listening to them! :)

But, on another note – I logged onto tumblr recently only to realise that I? Have? More fanart??

From maraviri on Tumblr

From er-we-are-meant-to-be, also on Tumblr!

And then – from my lovely Discord peeps:

From **Jaroo0707**, and his ever-persisting quest to make me involve a *fez* in this story…

From **Sapphiria**!

From WyvernSpirit, who keeps laughing about how big Siren ended up as

This is from lovypop17, who has also joined Jaroo0707's cause through *this*. Save to say, it is not working on me.

From Haruka_Anami!

EDIT 28/04/2020 - Here we have an *amazing* drawing by Rogue (from Discord) of Canary taking flight!

Thank you so, so much!

And I'm really sorry about the cliff-hanger last chapter – I know a lot of you were *super* frustrated about it. But I'd already made the chapter longer than usual and I am currently writing this very sentence not long before the day *before my upload date* comes to a close… so… yeah, I'm really cutting it fine here.

But thank you all for reading and commenting anyway!

The Power of Music

Chapter Notes

Sup.

Guess who, for once, has nothing to say in the starting notes? :D

Me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Instead of heading straight back to his seat beside Shinso, Midoriya instead hurried right the way around the inner workings of the Sports Festival stadium's corridors, to locate Recovery Girl's temporary office and check that Iida was ok.

He would have gotten there a lot quicker, if he hadn't bumped into someone on the way there.

"Sorry, young man," the tall, gaunt figure replied, holding out his hand to pull Midoriya to his feet.

It was then when they made eye contact.

"All Might," Midoriya breathed, scrambling to his feet without the man's help. "H-Hi…"

All Might blinked at him, utter surprise washing across his face. He glanced down at his deflated self and then back to Midoriya, "You know who I am?" he frowned.

Midoriya's heart skipped a beat. '*Does he… not remember who* I *am?'*

"We… met," Midoriya started hesitantly, surprised his voice was still working at all. "J-Just under a year ago now… actually."

He narrowed his sullen eyes as his mind whirred – then they lit up, as much as they possibly could whilst still concealing the white colour of his sclerae. "You're the… kid from that sludge villain incident, aren't you?" he realised.

Midoriya nodded unsurely, backing away slightly, “Y-Yes… that was… before I knew I had a Q-Quirk…”

“That’s right…” the hero murmured. “You said you were Quirkless back then… But look at you now! You’re doing very well for yourself, Canary,” he smiled.

Midoriya looked up at him slowly. This was the man who used to cover every inch of his wall at home. Now, only one faded poster remained – beside an ever-growing collection of other posters, and a string of Aozora’s photographs.

Midoriya’s descent into muteness was gradual. Over many years, he simply said less and less until the words just didn’t come at all. At first, this was only towards his classmates, but then others too, slipped into this growing sense of distrust, until only his mother ever heard Midoriya speak. But it was that fateful day, the day he met All Might, that he truly stopped talking.

He remembered, after All Might had told him to find a career which was more… *attainable* – running towards the sludge villain as it slowly suffocated Kacchan – attacking its weak points in a frenzied attempt to free his old friend. He couldn’t just stand there and watch him die.

But Midoriya couldn’t bring himself to put on a brave smile, like All Might could, whilst he did his best to save Kacchan – nor did he utter any of these things aloud.

After the other heroes berated him for being so *stupid*… Midoriya realised his dreams really were… unattainable.

To think, Midoriya could have just plodded on through life, completely unaware of the power he possessed, if it weren’t for the people who trod him down – and for the people who pulled him back up again, he wouldn’t be standing there today.

“Are you ok, young Midoriya?” All Might frowned.

Midoriya flinched, he must have been standing in silence, thinking, for a little too long. He nodded, in response.

“Well, this is fortuitous timing, because I had just been told to go looking for you,” he continued.

Midoriya, becoming increasingly uncomfortable in this situation, simply nodded a second time in hopes that this would be over soon.

“We saw you singing before getting into the arena for Iida’s match,” he explained.

Midoriya’s eyes grew wide, his head snapping up and his head beating faster in panic – was he being told off? Would he be disqualified?!

“Don’t worry, young man!” All Might laughed, “You’re not in trouble. In fact, for nearly any other person, we would have completely ignored it. But you see, you are very powerful! We have to keep things fair – so make sure to not start singing until the fight begins next time, alright?”

Staring at the floor, Midoriya suppressed the rising lump in the back of his throat and simply nodded.

“But with what you’ve shown us so far,” All Might smiled, giving him a thumbs up, and swelling into his muscle form in a puff of steam, “It is clear that you shall one day become a great hero!”

No.

You’re too late for that.

And then, unable to face this man any longer, Midoriya simply whispered, “Excuse me,” as he side stepped the hero and hurried past, almost breaking out into a run towards Recovery Girl’s office, leaving the number one hero standing behind him with a wavering smile and a bewildered mind.

He knocked thrice on the door.

“Hello?” Recovery Girl frowned as she let it creak open.

Midoriya was trying not to have a full-on fanboy freak out as she looked up to him with a soft smile on her face, “Ah, well if it isn’t Canary? It’s lovely to meet you, my dear.”

“Y-You too!” he stammered, “I-I’m here to see I-Iida. Is he still h-here?”

“Ah, such a sweet boy,” she grinned, opening the door wider, “Come in, come in.”

“Midoriya!” Iida exclaimed as he stumbled through the door, “What are you doing here?”

“O-Oh, just checking that you’re alright – that song d-doesn’t usually knock people un-unconscious,” Midoriya hastily explained.

Iida was sitting upright in a bed, with his legs hanging over one side. He straightened his glasses and smiled broadly at Midoriya, “How very kind of you! But I am perfectly alright – your Quirk has been slowly fading away – although I am still r-rather…” he yawned loudly, punctuating the end of his sentence, “tired…”

“I see that!” Midoriya laughed. “I’m really sorry – I didn’t see any other way to beat you rather than bringing you to a halt. I-I had speed songs but I knew that you had way more experience at high speeds than I did and therefore I thought it probably would have been strategically advantageous to –”

Iida laughed heartily, “Slow down, Midoriya!” he insisted, getting to his feet, “I haven’t heard you talk this much… well, before, really! It’s wonderful to hear!”

“O-Oh… thank you,” Midoriya blushed, rubbing the back of his head unsurely.

“You didn’t need to come and check on me,” Iida continued as he made his way towards the door. “You’ve got your match against Todoroki to prepare for.” He turned to Recovery Girl, swiftly thanked her with a bow, and then left with Midoriya trailing behind him.

“Yes, well, I-I think I have a plan,” Midoriya told Iida now they were walking back up the stairs towards the student seating area.

“Oh? Are you putting him to sleep like you did for me?” he questioned in obvious interest.

Midoriya shook his head, “I-I need to act a little more quickly with Todoroki – not that I didn’t need to for you! I-I thought for sure that I would lose…”

“Your dodging skills were quite remarkable, I must say,” Iida recalled. “I should have used my speed boosting move far earlier – but I was uncertain of what your power was and thought that it would be best to remain cautious.”

“W-Well, better l-luck next t-time, I g-guess,” Midoriya stuttered,

unsure of what to say in response to such a compliment.

Iida laughed, “When you make it into class 1-A, I’ll be sure to organise a rematch! How does that sound?”

“O-Ok!”

Iida stopped by the back of his class’ seats. Midoriya cringed as nearly every single one of the hero students turned in their seats to stare at him.

Kacchan wasn’t there, thankfully – neither was Kirishima, nor Mina and the student with the dark shadow Quirk, who were just about to start their match down in the arena.

But Todoroki was there.

“I’ll see you soon, Midoriya – good luck in the remainder of the Sports Festival!” Iida smiled, walking down the steps to his seat near the front.

“Hi, Canary!” Uraraka called out with a wave.

Jiro waved too, “Hey, you did great – I had no idea you were that powerful.”

Midoriya laughed nervously as he backed away, waving feebly as he went.

Todoroki glared at him from the corner of his eyes.

Then Kaminari leapt to his feet and pointed at Midoriya dramatically, “*YOU!”* he exclaimed.

It had been a while since Midoriya had felt this uncomfortable.

“How dare you hold back on us like that! I thought you were Quirkless!” he pouted.

“S-So did I,” was Midoriya reply as he turned on his heel and hurried out of sight.

He ran past class 1-B before things had to get even *more* awkward, and then leapt down the steps towards Shinso, who was now warm, dry and free from any and all ice. No one from class 1-C spoke to him, which was a nice break from the chaos it all brought. But Midoriya was pretty sure that Koneko took a picture of him…

[*It's a shame we won't get to fight next*] Midoriya signed to him as he sat down – relief to take a break from talking for a little while.

"Ashido is out of bounds! Tokoyami advances to the next round!" Midnight cried at the end of the *very* quick match between the two. Midoriya hadn't seen *any* of it.

[*You're only saying that because I would have won*] Shinso replied with a smirk.

"Not true," Midoriya pouted.

"It is," Shinso sighed in reply.

Siren was perched on his shoulder, and she happily transferred to Midoriya's as soon as she had the chance.

They sat there in silence for a moment, both lost in their own worlds. Midoriya was busy thinking through his song choices. He had to make sure the one against Todoroki was *perfect* – and not just for the power he needed from it.

The song he chose… wasn't his strongest for this particular ability. It had a different strength to many others with similar meanings – whether it would be useful in his upcoming fight or not was yet to be determined.

"*– the top scorer in the hero course's entrance exam this year, Katsuki Bakugo!"*

Midoriya looked up as Present Mic continued to announce the final match of the quarter finals.

"*Verses… he's shown us all he's as hard as stone – tougher than nails! It's Ejiro Kirishima!*

"READY?!

"BEGIN!"

"You said Bakugo would win this match," Shinso remembered, pulling the strategy sheet from Midoriya's bag and staring at the confident red arrows he had drawn all over it.

Midoriya nodded, staring at the two as they fought.

"But look at Bakugo," Shinso said, leaning forwards and narrowing his

eyes. “He’s on the defensive this time,” he pointed out as Kirishima continued to take lunging jabs at his opponent, drawing a speck of blood from his cheek as he remained untouched.

For some reason, Present Mic’s commentary of the match seemed to surprise Midoriya. He’d been silent all throughout *his* fights – but that was probably because no one would be able to hear his singing otherwise… Other than that, most fights had been very short lived so far, or else Midoriya was too busy to watch them. Only now did he really have the opportunity to listen in.

“*–and he countered!”* Present Mic cried as explosion after explosion was set off in Kirishima’s face, but nothing seemed to work, the smoke simply billowing off his hardened skin like it was nothing.

“Hm… Kirishima’s Quirk seems simple on the surface,” Midoriya muttered, “but it’s still effective…”

“Then isn’t there a good chance that he’ll come out on top?” Shinso predicted.

“All Quirks have their limits,” replied Midoriya.

“*WHAT?!”* Present Mic suddenly exclaimed, startling the two somewhat. Even Siren let out a surprised tweet. “*Bakugo’s countering again! But what’s this?! It seems to be working this time!”*

“Kacchan is smart,” Midoriya whispered. “He must have come to the same conclusion that I did.”

Shinso frowned, “And what’s that?”

BANG!

Kacchan let out one of his larger explosions – far bigger than what he ever attempted back in middle school – which was subsequently followed by a bombardment of smaller, but just as affective, blasts.

Seconds later, Kirishima fell to the floor, unconscious.

“Kirishima is knocked out. Bakugo is the winner!” Midnight exclaimed with a cheer from the audience.

“There’s only so long that Kirishima’s Quirk can last,” said Midoriya.

“…But the same goes for you,” Shinso reminded him.

"*With that vicious carpet bombing, Bakugo advances to the third round!"* Present Mic informed the audience.

As Kirishima was pulled out of the ring and Bakugo strolled back to the stands, his hands dug deep in his pockets, the screens above them flashed to an updated version of the brackets, before a display of the four remaining competitors: Bakugo, Tokoyami, Todoroki… and Midoriya.

"*LADIES, GENTLEMEN AND ALL THOSE IN BETWEEN! I GIVE YOU OUR FINAL FOUR!"*

Midoriya gulped, straightening the device on his arm and moving Siren back to Shinso's shoulder. "Wish me luck," he said, standing up and starting to make his way back down towards the arena, his heart thumping so heavily that he was sure it could burst free from his ribcage at any moment.

"Good luck," Shinso called back.

"Yeah, good luck, Canary," repeated Tachibana.

"Good luck!"

"Show 'em what you got, man!"

Midoriya smiled feebly at his classmates as he hurried past, waving goodbye as he took the *long* way down to the base of the stadium. Better avoid the back of the hero course seating area…

He put his headphones on as he walked, relishing in the muffled silence it brought.

God, he hoped this worked.

"*-THE FIRST MATCH OF THE SEMI-FINALS!"*

Todoroki marched up the stairs – one foot in front of the other.

"*It's the winner of the first round of the competition – Shouto Todoroki!"*

As he came to a halt within the concrete pitch, he glared at his

obstacle.

"*Verses – one of the leaders of our* second *round – Izuku Midoriya!"*

He narrowed his eyes as this *Canary* put on his makeshift support item. Fiddling with the buttons on the headphone and breathing heavily into his extendable microphone in a way of checking that it was activated.

"*START!"*

Todoroki put his right foot forward – ready to send his signature assault of ice in his opponent's direction – but then –

~Things We Lost In The Fire – Bastille~

"Things we lost –"

Todoroki hesitated – what was… this?

"–to the flames…"

Todoroki had met Canary on only a few occasions, most of which being on that very day. He had only listened to the radio once – out of curiosity as he travelled to UA. In all those scenarios, Canary had never once struck Todoroki as so… *intimidating*.

He shook his head, tearing his eyes away from Canary's piercing gaze, and took another couple of steps to initiate the fight.

But with the slow notes echoing across the stadium, Canary put his best foot forward too. He raised a hand at the fast approaching glacier of ice in as calm a manner as Todoroki had sent it.

"*Sits before–*"

He vanished from view for a mere second.

"*–shattered into ash…"*

And that's exactly what it did.

"These are the things!"

The ice – it *crumbled* at the touch of his enemy's fingertips – falling to the ground in a pile of dust and smoke.

"*The things we lost in the fire – fire – fire!"*

Todoroki had been trying to shield his eyes, gritting his teeth as the ash billowed over the stadium – but now he could see him, a distant glowing figure, running right at him.

"*The things we lost in the fire – fire – fire!"*

He came into view only seconds before Todoroki had the chance to throw up a shield of ice.

Canary landed right on it – not slipping as his flame covered hands dug into the ice – it turning to dust as the flames licked the crystalline structure.

Todoroki's eyes widened as he leapt back – that was the power – the fire cremated anything it touched *instantly*.

Canary grinned at him, "*–down the backs of tabletops –"*

Damnit – that was *annoying*.

Todoroki threw up another wall of ice, desperate to get some distance and rethink this.

The ash was starting to settle now – clearing the air so his eyes stopped watering – each breath he took didn't make coughs wrack his body. How Canary didn't manage to suffer from this problem, was beyond him.

"*–when loneliness came and you were away…"*

What the hell was this song meant to be about anyway?

His ice wall fell to the ground in another crash of grey dust – obscuring his vision again. The more of his ice he used – the harder it was to fight.

"*These are the things!"*

And Canary leapt back into view again. Jumping towards him, leaving clouds of ash in his wake, he swiped furiously at Todoroki, the flames flashing before his eyes.

"*–The things we lost in the–*"

Dodge.

"*Fire–*"

Duck.

"*–Fire–*"

Roll.

"*–Fire!*"

Todoroki lunged forwards at exactly the right moment, aiming for the device tied poorly to Canary's left arm, in a desperate attempt to freeze it over and stop the music – but the flames dissipated the ice crystals in the moment they formed, before Canary knocked him away harshly.

"*–in the fire – fire – fire!*"

And then Canary ran back again, hidden by the foggy illusion he had created as his voice continued to boom out across the stadium.

Why did he retreat so suddenly? That didn't make any sense – why –

Todoroki's eyes widened – *it was the music*.

The chorus had ended, and now the distant glow of Canary's fire dimmed along with the song – his fire had crept back down his arms; no longer eating at his sleeves. He must have been strongest right at the beginning – when the song swelled so suddenly – but now, during the verses, he was weaker.

Now was the time to make his move.

"*I was the match –*"

Todoroki cooled the air around him as quickly and as severely as he could, watching as the flakes of ash loaded themselves with ice, and fell to the ground like snow.

He could hear the announcer's excited yell as the stadium became more and more visible.

Canary stood across the pitch from him, flakes of snowy ash clinging

to his green tinged hair. He held out his hand towards him, a flame flickering in his palm.

"*–all we had* burn *on the pyre."*

Todoroki gritted his teeth and charged towards him once more, desperate to freeze him solid – covering his mouth in the process.

"*–sure as hell have nothing now!"*

…What?

"*We were born–"*

"I have nothing*," the brainwasher snarled.*

"*–and we sure as hell–"*

"I've started from the very bottom of this hell-hole of a society. Know that Canary has too – and he will beat you for me!"

"*These are the things!"*

The flames reached him this time as they were thrown from Canary's hands – the chorus bringing his greater power as Todoroki stumbled backwards, trying and failing to send ice in his enemy's direction to freeze him in place.

He could hear the crunch of the snow beneath his feet despite the reverberating sound of Canary's singing – wait –

The snow – It covered the ground – smothering the raised pitch and a little beyond as yet more of the ash continued to fall.

And he couldn't see the boarder lines.

Now he realised that Canary always positioned himself further towards the middle of the pitch than he did. His feet scraped across the ground, as if trying to see if they had stepped over the line at any

point.

"*Do you understand that we will never be the same again?!"*

Canary leapt to his left side – Todoroki's fire… if he used his fire he could – *no* – no, he *wouldn't*–

Canary grasped Todoroki's arm – but he didn't let his own flames lick Todoroki's skin. He stared into his eyes – the ferocity fading from his expression as he sang:

"*The future's in our hands and we will – never be the same again…"*

Todoroki tossed his hand away, snarling as he sent more of his ice in Canary's direction. He jumped and dodged – not able to defy the laws of physics and disintegrate it this time.

What the *hell* was this Quirk supposed to be?

"*–never be the same again!"*

And then – with a flash of anger across Canary's face – he lashed out, leaping off Todoroki's ice and kicking him right in the stomach.

"These are the things!"

He remembered being curled up, cradling his injured body.

"*The things we lost!"*

He remembered his father standing over him, scowling.

"The things we lost in the fire – fire – fire!"

As Todoroki relied on his reflexes, scrambling to his feet to evade Canary – he remembered what *he* had lost.

"*These are the things!"*

His childhood.

"*The things we lost –"*

The family he could have loved.

"*The things we lost –"*

his *control* over *his* future – over his Quirk.

"*–in the fire – fire – fire!"*

Canary span on his heel and kicked him around the head with impressive flexibility. Todoroki would have fallen to the ground if it weren't for the support from the ice he summoned in a split-second response – although the barricade between the two didn't last long, before it shattered into the grey-white substance that now overwhelmed every surface.

If Todoroki used his fire now – he could melt all the snow and overwhelm Canary *himself*…

Now, he had to use it now!

That sounded like Father's voice. He could almost *feel* his eyes glaring down at him from the stands.

No!

He *refused*.

He refused to lose anything more to the fire.

"*Just remember, stay true to yourself," his mother had once said. Long before he lost her to his father's flames. "You are not a prisoner of your lineage – it's ok to use your power; to become who you want to be."*

But what would he be losing – if not himself?

And so, finally, he set himself free.

"*Flames they licked – the wounds…"*

Todoroki's eyes widened – the flames roaring up his side as Canary's died down – the song was coming to an end but then…

…the snow beneath his feet melted away.

"*–all that I adored…"*

And there was the boundary line.

There was a silence that fell over the stadium, whilst Canary turned off his music and smiled, bowing to Todoroki.

Finally, Midnight raised her whip into the sky, and exclaimed, "Todoroki is out of bounds! Midoriya advances to the final!"

Todoroki stumbled backwards, his own fire fading. Until the throbbing in his head became too much, and he collapsed under the weight of his own mind.

The song echoed in the back of Todoroki's mind.

Flames they licked… the wounds…

As he woke up, he reached for his scar, stroking the damaged skin in hopes to banish the phantom pains.

"How are you feeling, dearie?"

Todoroki's gaze drifted to the kind old face of Recovery Girl.

He didn't reply, sitting up and blinking at his surroundings as ash fell from his hair. He was in the old heroine's temporary office at the stadium. Wait, what *happened?*

"You have a very worried visitor, if you're willing to see him," Recovery Girl informed him as she poured a couple of her energy gummies into his open hand.

Todoroki frowned, "Who?" he croaked.

She just smiled, before using her cane to hobble open the door and pull it open, "Come in, come in," she insisted, and Todoroki's visitor did just that.

Todoroki furrowed his brow – why on *Earth* was –

"I-I'm sorry," Canary stammered. "I-I think I kicked you a few times, are you ok?"

He blinked at him. Todoroki could already feel the bruises blossoming on his gut – but it was nothing he wasn't used to. "Yeah… fine," he replied, still thoroughly confused.

"O-Oh, that's good to h-hear," Canary sighed, fiddling with the wire attached to the headphones around his neck. "I-I was a little worried w-when you passed out…"

Todoroki rubbed the side of his head, where yet another large lump was forming. As he did so – he could hear the distant explosions of the next match.

"Shouldn't you be watching this fight?" Todoroki pointed out as he stood up.

Canary hesitated, "Oh, right – um – n-no, it's ok, I-I already know what's going to happen anyway…"

"You… do?"

"Well, yeah? I mean… T-Tokoyami's dark shadow is great and all but… I'm pretty sure it has a weakness to light? I-I've been watching you all… That's how I figured out you w-weren't using your fire," he admitted.

Todoroki wasn't sure what to think of this strange new edition to his life. He wasn't like anyone he'd ever met before at UA – or even

beyond, for that matter. But no one else would come and check on him after he passed out, even if there *was* a possibility it was due to injuries inflicted by them.

Recovery Girl smiled as she sent the two on their way, letting the door swing closed behind them.

They walked in silence through the corridors for a while, Todoroki's brain whirring as he tried to process the events of the last… how ever long it had been.

"I liked that song," he eventually said.

The words seemed to startle Canary, "Y-Yeah?" he replied.

Todoroki nodded in confirmation, "I'd never heard it before."

"I-It gives a… useful power for me," Canary explained.

Todoroki raised an eyebrow at him, "And what power would that be exactly?"

Canary wavered, before giving him a feeble laugh, "Well, you see – t-that didn't actually end up doing what I *thought* it would…"

Todoroki stared at him, "You… didn't know what your Quirk would do?"

"Um, no, not really… Well – I've a-actually practised that song quite a few times. The fire has done the err… ash shattering thing – a few times before? But not to that extent. I-I think that my Quirk becomes stronger if I'm more emotional… or maybe because I'm trying really, really hard to convey the message of the song…"

"You were?"

Canary flinched. "You weren't using your fire… and then earlier – in your match against… I think his name's Sero? I, err… well, I just – you looked so sad… I know what that feels like…"

Todoroki let his shoulders relax, stopping at the bottom of the stairs as he stared at him. He opened his mouth to reply, before closing it again, unsure. He wasn't used to this… talking to people. But then again, Canary didn't seem to be either.

He held out his hand to Canary, "You… deserve your place in the finals," he told him as Canary cautiously took his hand.

The last words of Canary's brainwashing friend resonated in his brain.

"Then I hope you'll look forward to seeing those places filled in your godforsaken class – because we'll be taking them."

"–and your place in the hero course," Todoroki added.

Canary broke out into a wobbly smile, "T-Thanks…"

Todoroki had shaken the hands of far too many people in his lifetime. Not a single one of which was someone he legitimately respected, nor admired. But you could tell a lot about a person by how they shook your hand. And Canary? Canary was *tired*. He felt so weak, wobbly; unsure of himself. Whether that was simply his personality, or him being seriously lethargic, was up for debate.

They started to walk up the stairs together.

"So, um, a-are we friends n-now?" Canary stammered, almost tripping over a step in the process.

Todoroki blinked at him, remembering something he had said to class 1-A only a few hours beforehand:

"*We're not here to be each other's friends."*

"I…" said Todoroki, focusing intently on his steps as they continued to climb upwards. He smiled softly, "I would be honoured to be."

Canary's face lit up, "A-After the Sports Festival – I can give you my number and then I'll send that song to you!"

They reached the top of the stairs, and then the back of class 1-A's seating area. "I look forward to it," Todoroki smiled.

He turned back to his class, his smile fading quickly as he saw them all staring at him.

"*WOAH! Bakugo leaps* behind *Tokoyami!"* the commentator cried over the stadium.

Canary peered over Todoroki's shoulder at the match still ongoing, below in the arena.

"How long was I unconscious?" Todoroki frowned. They'd already cleared away all the snow and ash and Bakugo's fight wasn't far from finishing.

"*HEY! Stop obscuring the arena – how am I supposed to commentate when I can't see?!"*

Canary cringed at those words – Bakugo had just sent a vast amount of smoke up into the sky, hiding him and Tokoyami from view.

"Quite a while, man," Kirishima replied, scratching at the plasters on his face. "And – hey, is that Canary?"

Canary let out a squeal as he was spotted, before giving a very feeble wave.

"Tokoyami gives up!" Midnight cried. "Bakugo is the winner of this match!"

The others turned to stare down at the pitch again.

The commentator was quick to announce the results, "*That means our final fight will be between Bakugo and Canary!"*

Bakugo turned his head slowly, and then narrowed his eyes up at Canary.

He gulped.

Todoroki's classmates started muttering about the outcome of the match, but all Todoroki could think about was Canary's fate.

"Good luck in your last match," Todoroki told Canary, who continued to stare down at Bakugo, practically shaking in his boots.

"T-Thanks," he barely whispered in response, "I think I'm going to need it…"

Chapter End Notes

Fan art time!

We have a sweet little duet sketch by **FadingRiver**

A design of a very musical room by **lovypop17**! And they did this one too!

Some really cool art of Siren by **RileyMoore_Thomas**

This is from **WyvernSpirit**, who did a little comic strip of the scene in chapter 10, when their character called up the radio station! And then and idea of their own of the character and Midoriya meeting in person, and then, *sigh*, this is another attempt to make me include a fez…

This is from Infinitygalixy – it's lots of mini Siren sketches!

And here look! 101 from Discord drew my little avatar from my profile picture – with a mini student no.18 and a more life-sized Siren! :D

EDIT 28/04/2020 - One of my favourite fanarts *ever* - It's Canary singing Things We Lost in the Fire by Rogue!

Songs used in this chapter:
Things We Lost In The Fire - Bastille
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYpJJPsa1sU

Oh, and also - sorry for this chapter for being that little bit shorter than the others. The next one will be roughly the same length as this - but I have to split up the story *somehow*.

Confrontation

Chapter Notes

I just want to say – the discord's really been amazing guys (link in the end-endnotes)! We have lots of new story ideas starting there – including several fics that have now been posted! (I wrote the summaries for way too many of them, why am I enjoying this so much? XD)

https://archiveofourown.org/works/20410000/chapters/48414568 - **Blooming in Adversity**

https://archiveofourown.org/works/20392288 - **Beneath the Monster**

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After leaving Todoroki, Midoriya hurried straight back down the stairs; ran all the way to his designated waiting room and proceeded to pace in circles, staring at the ground beneath his feet blankly as his mind raced…

"*–Selectively mute."*

The class turned and stared at him, and Midoriya sunk further into his desk, bile rising up the back of his throat as his shoulders began to shake.

Whatever words further droned from his teacher's mouth fell short of Midoriya ears. All he could hear was a ringing noise – like the sound which reverberated around him when Kacchan used his Quirk.

BOOM!

There it was.

"HEY, WHAT THE HECK DID HE MEAN BY THAT?!" Kacchan yelled.

So loud – always so, so loud.

And not a good kind of loud either – not like All Might – not like Present Mic on the radio – this was a scary *loud.*

The teacher had gone now – Midoriya realised. How long had he been gone? How long had he been sitting there, lost to the mess *that his mind had become?*

"How can you be selectively *mute?" scoffed one of those blank faced people who never told him their name. There were too many names on the register. And why would Midoriya cast any of them to memory, if not all bothered doing the same to his?*

"So, what, you just choose not to talk to certain people?" frowned another. "In which case – I'd like to be selectively mute too," they laughed.

Not funny. Really – not *funny.*

"Basically – he just doesn't want to talk to us."

"How on Earth do you think he managed to get a doctor's *note for it?"*

Why were they talking like he wasn't there?

"It's just pathetic, Deku*," snarled Kacchan. "Bet you think you're above us all, huh? Too* smart *to be associated with losers like these!"*

"Hey, Katsuki! Watch your mouth!"

"Yeah, at least Midoriya's got the decency to not insult us to our faces!"

"Oh, right *he* can't *– remember, he doesn't want to even* speak *to us."*

*"*I'm *getting into UA's hero course – and even if you get into general studies – you'll be eating my* dust *whilst I become the number one hero, and you'll be left in the* gutter*!" Kacchan told him, tossing his books on the floor.*

Midoriya scrambled off his chair to retrieve the scattered paper.

"He said he'd be a paramedic, right?"

*"*Said *is a loose term."*

"How can you help anyone *if you refuse to speak to them? Just seems rude, to be honest."*

He fumbled with his notes, almost dropping them again as he wished being mute meant no one could speak to him *either.*

"Defenceless Izuku – look at him, he's practically shaking in his boots!"

“Come on, Deku – speak to us!

“Yeah, come on*, already!”*

“Just leave him. If he doesn’t want to speak to us, then he’s not worth our time.”

“I heard all he does is study. That’s why he’s top of the class – and why he’s got no friends either.”

“Ha, ha – is he going to cry?”

“Stupid Deku.”

“Where are you going, Midoriya?”

“Run back to your little hidey hole then, Deku!”

“Hey, what are you doing?”

“Speak to us, Midoriya!”

“Midoriya?”

“It’s not that hard, Deku!”

“Snap out of it!”

“We’re not done here yet, bastard!”

“Midoriya?!”

“CANARY!”

Midoriya blinked, his hand gripping on the table leg – it was solid; real.

Shinso was there, holding on to his shoulders, a worried expression covering his face, “Are you alright?”

He leant into the touch of the table – where reality was certain. He nodded weakly.

Shinso sat, cross legged in front of him, clearly freaked. “You have a while until the final starts,” he informed him. “Is there something you wanted to talk about?”

Siren tweeted softly at Midoriya, hopping onto his knee and cocking her head to one side.

“I’m sorry,” he mumbled, pushing his hair out of his face, “I think I got… lost in thought.”

“Yeah,” Shinso replied, standing up to move to a proper chair.

Midoriya followed after a moment’s hesitation.

“Were you thinking about Bakugo?” Shinso supposed, hitting the nail on the head.

Midoriya focused his attention on Siren, who had just landed in front of him on the table. He nodded.

“Just beat him up.”

Midoriya almost laughed.

“I’m not kidding – you’d probably be applauded for it – no, you *will* be applauded for it.”

[*I don’t want to beat him up*] Midoriya signed.

“Yes, you do.”

Midoriya was smiling now, unable to shake his head to deny this.

Siren chirped supportively.

“You do,” Shinso repeated. “At this point, it doesn’t even matter if you win or lose. Either way, the school simply *has* to acknowledge you for the hero course – and with you, they’ll probably consider me. Right now, the victory *you* need, is the one over whatever the hell is going on in your head.”

He nodded, still smiling at his friend. “W-Well then, what do I do?”

“For what, the fight?”

He simply nodded once more.

“Chose a song that will *really* blow his fuse,” Shinso grinned manically.

“…Isn’t that a rather bad strategy for someone who is going to *literally*

blow me up?"

He laughed, "You don't get it! *Mimic* him."

"M-Mimic…. What?" Midoriya frowned, unable to suppress his bewildered smile.

"You know his Quirk, right?" Shinso continued as Midoriya nodded in agreement, "You know how he works. Then find a song which gives you a similar power to him and *use it against him.* Beat him at his *own game."*

"I-I don't know if I can beat him."

"You've come this far," Shinso acknowledged. "It can't hurt to try."

Midoriya winced, "I don't know about that…"

"Oh, come on – stop twisting my words," Shinso sighed, standing up from his chair, grabbing Siren and plonking her back on his shoulder. She didn't protest. "It doesn't matter if you end up in first place anymore," he repeated, trying to drill that fact into his head.

Midoriya stood up too, thinking through the various songs he'd practised for fun over the past few weeks. There was one that… yes – that's the one… It described Kacchan perfectly. But did he really want to risk it?

"You will have won the moment you start singing."

Shinso held out his hand and with a stifled laugh, they did an awkward fist bump – something that Midoriya had never attempted before in his *life* – and he very much doubted that Shinso had either.

"Are you really ok, though?" Shinso pressed. "You don't look too good."

Midoriya smiled, sitting back down in his chair. "I'm just… *tired.*"

"You look it," Shinso agreed, pulling his own seat around the table so he could sit opposite him. "Is it to do with your Quirk?"

He hesitated before giving him an affirmative nod. "That last song… the one I used against Todoroki – it was so much more powerful than it should have been… I think it was my emotions. I got worked up, so my power did too but it really sucked up my energy and I…" Midoriya shook his head, unsure of what he was concluding. "I don't know how

much my Quirk can take…"

There was a moment of silence before Shinso replied, "You've only had it for a few weeks. Of *course*, you'd reach your limits quicker than the hero course students."

"I-I think I can manage one more song," said Midoriya confidently. "I… only need one more anyway."

"Right," Shinso nodded. "Just be careful."

Silence fell between them again as Midoriya's mind whirred.

"I have an idea of what song to use," he smirked after a moment or so.

Untangling the wire from his shirt, he leaned over the table and put the headphones on Shinso's head, before starting to play the song in question.

It took a while before Shinso's grin reached his eyes, but once he reached the chorus, he was almost shaking his head in disbelief.

"If you can sing *that*," Shinso told him, returning his headphones, "you deserve more than just a dumb medal."

Deku.

Bakugo was in the finals of the greatest sporting event in Japan – and his opponent was none other than *Deku*. The Quirkless, mute, *loser* that had been trailing him around like a lost puppy ever since he could remember.

But now he wasn't mute. And he wasn't Quirkless either. And he certainly wasn't the nobody that Bakugo had become accustomed to kicking aside whenever he got too freaking clingy. He was calling himself *Canary* – had a Quirk that easily matched Icy-Hot's – and had yet to be scratched by *any* of his classmates. Not even the ones that Bakugo had stared at on his first few days of UA, with the profound realisation that perhaps he *wasn't* the best. But, oh, he had showed them – he'd shown them all. He was at the very top of this damned school! No one was going to stop him from being the best of the best! But then…

–There was Deku.

Bakugo kicked the door open to his waiting room, only for his eyes to rest on the faces of two others, sitting opposite each other around the table in the centre of the room.

“Hey, what are you two bastards doing here?!” Bakugo snarled, “This is my place to –”

Waiting room 2.

Damn it.

“Back off, would you?” said the purple haired imbecile from general studies. That tired, skeletal looking guy with the brainwashing Quirk.

Bakugo gritted his teeth and marched up to him. “What the hell do you want, Eyebags?”

“I want you to back the hell off,” he said, standing up and glaring at him. “Do you want me to use my Quirk on you?”

Bakugo didn’t dare reply to that question. Instead, he turned his head towards Deku, who had cowered into his chair like he always used to, with his stupid little bird cupped in his hands.

“Are you going to freaking speak to me now, huh?” Bakugo questioned him.

Deku simply averted his eyes, stroking the bird gingerly.

“You better not freeze up on me,” he continued, baring his teeth as he ignored Eyebags. “I want the world to know that you’re *nothing* compared to me! I will beat you at your best – however *pathetic* that may be!”

And with that, he turned on his heel and stormed away.

If Deku thought he could sing him a little song and everything would be over and done with – then he had another thing coming.

“*WELCOME TO THE FINAL BATTLE OF THE UA SPORTS FESTIVAL!”*

Present Mic cried. *"In just a moment here we'll see which first years come out on top!"*

Midoriya was already standing in his position, opposite Kacchan in the arena. He had his headphones on. He could hear the muffled voice of his teacher, and the enthusiastic roar of the crowd. But he could also hear the thumping of his own heart as he stared at his childhood friend – at the sadistic smile spread across his face and the position of his hands, ready to send that explosive power of his roaring in Midoriya's direction. If he didn't time this right – it would be over in a matter of seconds.

"Yes, It all comes down to this, folks! It's the top of the hero course – Katsuki Bakugo! Verses – the top of general studies – Izuku Midoriya!"

This was it – this was what it had all been building up to.

Midoriya turned his head to look at the distant face of Shinso in the crowd. He mimicked his grin and turned back to Kacchan.

Kacchan flinched, his smile fading for a moment, before returning with a more determined force.

"*READY?!"*

Midoriya activated his microphone and breathed deeply into it; hearing the sound echo across the pitch as his hand hovered over the play button on the device strapped to his arm, suppressing the painful throbbing feeling inside his head.

"*BEGIN!"*

~Legend – The Score~

Midoriya felt his grin grow wider as the music began to swell into being. He relished in the confusion that briefly flickered across Kacchan's face.

This was *not* Midoriya's normal type of music.

And that's what made it so perfect.

As he let the first sound fall from his mouth, he expertly manoeuvred himself to evade Kacchan's first attack. It was much easier to fight with this song than it had been with Todoroki's. His had been much slower – not good for a fast-paced battle. He'd barely come out on top of that anyway. A couple of seconds more and he would have been screwed – but now wasn't the time to think back on where he could have gone wrong. Or else he would have even *more* regrets to deal with after messing *this* up too.

"*Here we go, here we go!"* he began, "*It's about time that we set it off."*

He was walking backwards now, easily predicting Kacchan's first movements, like he had his entire life. He also knew that it wouldn't be long until, like Shinso had said, his fuse would blow – and his fighting style would be thrown out of sync as his anger took hold. Midoriya couldn't be sure if it was a strength or a weakness.

Midoriya ducked and rolled as another blast was sent his way, remerging behind his opponent – about to hit him *hard*.

But he hesitated – he should have hit Kacchan around the head – but… why did he *hesitate?*

Kacchan turned faster than Midoriya could think, attempting to achieve what Midoriya hadn't. With another duck, Midoriya avoided that right hook of his.

So *predictable*. Midoriya could use that…

Now he was back to evading as the fury built up in Kacchan's expression. Midoriya should be thanking him – after all, *he* was the one who taught him how to dodge, if not unknowingly.

"Got me singing like –"

His smile returned.

"*Bang, bang!"*

And Kacchan's faded.

"*Bang, bang!"*

He felt the energy begin to run through his very veins.

"–this fire's a weapon!"

He tried to put some distance between them – using the skills he'd innocently picked up on in dance to evade Kacchan further. The power roared towards Midoriya's palms, building up and up – until he let go.

"*–won't stop 'til we're legends!"*

BOOM!

The fire rippled through the air, much like it did for Kacchan's Quirk, and it engulfed him as Midoriya was propelled into the air.

"*WHAT'S THIS?! Canary's using his Quirk to completely copy Bakugo's!"* Present Mic exclaimed in excitement as Kacchan roared out in frustration, failing to supress his nitrogenous sweat from igniting in the heat that Midoriya sent his way.

BANG! – went Midoriya's new power as he sent another explosion at Kacchan.

It tossed him off the ground again, until he skidded to a halt not far from where Kacchan had been hit.

"*Won't stop 'til we're legends!"*

Oh, he looked *furious*.

"*– here we go, it's my turn –"*

Bakugo swivelled and threw an explosion of his own at Midoriya. He countered with his own, slightly weaker blast – now that the chorus was over. But it didn't matter, because he knew how to deal with a power like this. He'd studied Kacchan's for *years*.

"*Yeah – a dreamer with the fever to be great was all I ever want –"*

Their combat was faster paced now – evading and counter-attacking – exchanging the crackles and pops of each other's abilities in a fiery game of cat and mouse, leaving scorch marks all across the concrete and the crowd cheered and yelled beyond the bellowing sound of Midoriya's music. But Kacchan's aim was becoming more precise – his anger just kept on building.

"*Got me singing like –"*

But so was Midoriya's – and the chorus was just about to return, and so with it would the fullest extent of this song's abilities.

"*Bang, bang – this fire's a weapon!"*

Kacchan didn't let him run this time – the blast would just have to be point blank as his power dipped and started to surge up inside of him.

"*Bang, bang – won't stop 'til we're legends!"*

KABOOM!

And the music stopped.

Kacchan had grabbed a hold of his arm, pushing his extended palm out of the way so that Midoriya's fire barely skimmed his cheek, as he sent his own power straight at his left arm, frying the mechanism of his and Hatsume's invention, burning the wire and searing through the strap.

Midoriya tried to leap backwards as Present Mic screamed out the result of the hit, but Bakugo didn't let go of his arm. He swung his fist and hit Midoriya square in the jaw.

He tumbled to the ground, rolling across the rough concrete painfully.

He looked up as Bakugo sneered; his foot crunched down on the most integral part of Midoriya's support item.

"Is that all you've got?!" he leered, and then charged.

In panic, Midoriya held up his right hand again, blasting Bakugo as he leapt to his feet – he hadn't expected for Midoriya's power to linger. But it was far weaker than it had been. It could now be easily compared with the fire that Bakugo toyed with in middle school – what he used to threaten rather than attack.

Midoriya's cool confidence faded quicker than the song had when it was cut short.

Ripping the dangling wire from his headphones, Midoriya summersaulted to avoid another blast.

Without the beat of the music, he felt lost – his movements uncoordinated and messy.

His head was *throbbing* – his body felt sluggish – he could barely see *straight*, let alone keep fighting.

Now what? What could he do without his music?

Sure, he could activate his Quirk without a backing track – no problem. But it was weaker – and moreover, in the stress of the situation, the lyrics simply didn't come to his mind.

"Don't you *dare* fall mute on me again!" Bakugo roared – Midoriya was surprised it wasn't amplified by his microphone.

"*Without his singing, Canary's power is completely done for!"* Present Mic shouted across the stadium. But his voice didn't hold its usual excitement – he just sounded worried.

All Midoriya could hear beyond that was a ringing noise…

…the one which reverberated around him when Kacchan used his Quirk.

BOOM! BOOM! BANG!

And now he was being tossed around like a ragdoll – none of his dodges successful – the heat kissing his skin like he was right back in middle school.

"You are nothing, *Deku!"*

BOOM! BOOM! BANG!

"You won't be getting on the hero course – and your freakish friend won't either!"

He caught a glimpse of Shinso up in the stands. He was shouting something. Midoriya couldn't hear anything more than Kacchan's explosions –

BOOM! BOOM! BANG!

–but the very image of his moving mouth brought a little spark of determination back from the depths of Midoriya's mind and –

BOOM! BOOM! BANG!

– and he didn't need music to find a rhythm.

He held his hand over his microphone to block out the sound as he shouted back, "Don't you *dare* insult my friend! He's spent his whole life being called a villain – whilst you were called a hero! Well, you know what?! THEY GOT IT THE WRONG WAY AROUND!"

He gritted his teeth and let a grin return to his face. He pushed past the limits of his Quirk, as he started to clap his hands, and stomp his feet.

~We Will Rock You – Queen~

He couldn't go on much longer – but he put on a smile like… Present Mic would! And he kept going anyway. Maybe, in some piece of luck – greater than what blessed him in Todoroki's match – he could still win this.

So, he slammed his feet into the ground and clapping his hands close to the microphone by his lips.

He couldn't hear much, despite the fact that the music was no longer booming through his headphones. But, despite that, it didn't take long until even Kacchan's blasts were drowned out by the deafening sound of a very familiar beat.

"*Buddy, you're a boy, make a big noise –*"

"DAMNIT!" Kacchan cried, lunging towards him with another blast.

He'd only used this song *once* before. Every other power he'd utilised in the festival had been heavily practised and well thought out… to some extent. But this was certainly a spur of the moment decision.

And even through his headphones, Midoriya could hear every single member of the audience scream those words, laughing; clapping their hands; stomping their feet; joining in and edging Midoriya on.

"*Singing, we–*"

Midoriya slammed his feet into the ground once more – but this time was not like the others. The concrete beneath him cracked and crumbled; great boulders rose from it, which Midoriya kicked skilfully in Kacchan's direction.

"*We will, we will, rock you!*"

Midoriya's feet moved in time to the beat that the stadium provided for him – spitting the words like venom at his opponent.

"*Buddy, you're a –"*

Surely, Kacchan was running out of go like Midoriya was? Wasn't most of his sweat burnt away by Midoriya's earlier song? Just how much stronger had he gotten during his short time in the hero course; since his explosions were last sent in Midoriya's way?

But Kacchan continued to roar as Midoriya's head persisted to throb. He knew he was still singing – but the words were simply falling from his mouth at this point. He felt like he was fighting for his *life*, rather than just for a competition.

"*We will, we will, rock you!"*

One of Midoriya's boulders whizzed past his face, cutting into it and leaving behind a nasty red mark.

"*We will, we will, rock you!"*

He was thrown a distance away, forced to be on the defensive like he'd been with Kirishima, as he struggled to destroy the pieces of rubble that Midoriya kicked and punched in his direction.

Midoriya's knuckles were raw from impacting the concrete, but the physical pain meant nothing to him compared to what Kacchan had put him through in the past. He still bore those scars – mentally. This was him, fighting through them.

"*–somebody better put you back into your place!"*

And Kacchan *screamed*.

"We will, we will, rock you!"

He leapt up onto one of the discarded boulders and propelled himself into the air.

"*We will, we will, rock you!"*

Midoriya tried his hardest, frantically tossing the rock at the explosive hero student as he spun himself around in the air, avoiding every single projectile.

"We will, we will, rock you!"

Kacchan spun himself into a swirling whirlwind of smoke and fire as Midoriya threw up the best shield he could.

“*We will, we will, rock you!”*

BOOM!

Shinso stood up, leaning over the wall that barricaded him from the arena, desperate to see through the thick cloud of smoke and rubble that had been tossed up by Bakugo’s last explosion whilst the crowd stopped singing and cried out in panic. It was clear whose side they were on.

Present Mic didn’t even take the opportunity to say that he once *again* couldn’t properly see the end of the match. He instead sounded frantic and fearful as he questioned if they (meaning, Midoriya) were ok down there.

Shinso’s heart was in his mouth. Even *Siren* had shut up.

It took longer than Shinso would have liked for the dust to settle and the scene to become apparent.

Midoriya’s headphones were in pieces, strewn across the pitch along with the rest of his makeshift support item. They weren’t in a much better state than the arena itself – which looked more like a war ground than the result of a simple Sports Festival match – it had been completely annihilated.

As for the competitors – the winner was clear.

In the centre of the arena, grasping the top of other’s shirt as he hung limp in his grip.

Was Bakugo.

He was screaming something at Midoriya, who was unconscious.

Moments later, Midnight appeared through the clouds of dust, pulling at her hero costume to send her fragrance in Bakugo's direction, so he too, fell to the ground, dropping Midoriya's damaged self harshly onto the wrecked ground in the process.

"Midoriya was knocked unconscious," Midnight explained to the crowd, raising her hand in the air, "That means, Bakugo is the winner!"

The crowd wasn't quite as enthusiastic as they perhaps might have been, if it had been anyone but Midoriya falling short of victory.

Shinso gripped the edge of the wall. Midoriya had been so close – *so* close.

"*A-And with that incredible display of power, the final match is officially over,"* said Present Mic. He didn't seem too happy about it, but *someone* needed to announce the results. "*That means – despite an extremely close battle – the first-year champion from the UA Sports Festival is Katsuki Bakugo from class 1-A…"*

"*Unbiased,"* Eraser Head snapped at him.

"*GOOD JOB TO ALL OUR COMPETITORS!"*

"Come on, Siren," Shinso muttered. He grabbed Midoriya's rucksack after tossing the remainder of his notes inside and ran past the rest of class 1-C, ignoring their mutterings and worried gazes as he went.

Midoriya could have sworn that he had never felt so exhausted in his *life*.

When his consciousness finally flooded back to him, a brief moment of bewilderment led his tired mind to believe he was back in middle school, waking up early for another, tedious day, even after the last had led to him running home as fast as his aching legs could carry him.

Opening his eyes, this thought was quickly corrected by the sight of the white, sterile room and the blue curtain which separated his bed from whatever was behind it.

Ignoring the protests of his muscles, he sat upright with a soft groan.

The curtain was quickly thrown open.

“You’re awake!” Shinso exclaimed with a relieved smile. “You were unconscious for way longer than you should have been, Midoriya,” he sighed, rubbing his temples as if to dispel the stress.

“W-What?” Midoriya groaned, still struggling to get his head around what had just happened and why he was there.

He reached up to rub his eyes, but his fingers made contact with the many plasters that covered his face, and the bandage wrapped tightly around his forehead.

“You took quite a hit,” Recovery Girl explained as she joined Shinso on Midoriya’s side of the curtain. Unravelling Midoriya’s fingers, she poured a selection of energy gummies into his palm for him to eat. “Although I think you wouldn’t have lasted much longer in that match despite Bakugo’s attack. Quirk exhaustion is very serious – and I don’t expect for you to be dismissing it so readily ever again, do you understand me?!” she ordered.

“Y-Yes, ma’am,” Midoriya replied, before shoving most of the gummies in his mouth at once.

Siren then zoomed into view. She hovered before him, tweeting frantically.

“I-I’m sorry!” Midoriya explained as soon as he’d managed to swallow the gummies. “C-Calm down, Siren, it’s o-ok.”

She didn’t seem very satisfied but landed on the bed beside him anyway.

“I’ve healed you enough for you to walk,” Recovery Girl continued – which sounded slightly ominous. “So, I’m going to tell them that they can start the awards ceremony soon. I’ll give you five minutes,” she smiled, before disappearing from view.

Midoriya turned back to Shinso, [*How long have I been out?*] he questioned, after popping the last few sweets in his mouth.

[*About twenty minutes*]

Midoriya almost choked, “T-Twenty minutes?”

Shinso nodded with raised eyebrows. “But don’t worry, they haven’t been waiting for you long. They had to fix the arena first anyway. You and Bakugo really did a number on it – and each other.”

“I-Is he ok?” Midoriya whispered in reply.

“Yeah – you… came out a lot worse than he did,” Shinso explained. “And your headphones are *definitely* dead.”

Midoriya laughed meekly as he stroked Siren’s feathers. Then he stopped, wide eyed, and turned to Shinso again, “Oh my God – I came in second place!”

Shinso blinked at him, “Yeah.”

“I almost beat *Kacchan!”*

“Err, yeah, I guess,” Shinso laughed at Midoriya’s excitement.

Midoriya lunged forward and grabbed a hold of Shinso’s shoulders. “Do you think they’ll let us on the hero course?!”

Shinso hesitated for a moment, before that manic smile of his returned to his expression. He shrugged off Midoriya’s hands and held out his fist. Siren quickly flew up to land on it.

With a laugh, Midoriya gave him a fist bump, with Siren singing happily on top.

“Next stop,” Shinso grinned.

And together they said, “–Hero course!”

Chapter End Notes

Fanart – fan*art* – fan***art*** –

I’m running out of ways to express my excitement for this.

We HAVE – a casual Canary with our favourite Siren by **MoonShadowPup**!

A depiction of one of the combined uses of Canary's and Shinso's Quirks by **lovypop17**

Some cool word art thingy from **Error_User_Unknown**

And this is from **lovypop17** who has now been in the fanart description three times in a row and thus gets a message:

"I art like bowling but instead of it being a turkey it's a siren."
Songs used in this chapter:

Legend - The Score
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jecQcgbyetw
We Will Rock You - Queen
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhTRhAX_QBA

But yeah... I know a lot of you were really hoping that Midoriya would win the Sports Festival. But I promise I have some important stuff planned referring back to him getting silver instead of gold. It's important for both Midoriya and Bakugo. Also, realistically – when someone who's had their, extremely complicated and limited, Quirk for about a couple of weeks, is put up against someone who has had years to practise and perfect his very powerful and devastating ability, who is going to come out on top? Midoriya *barely* defeated Todoroki. With more practise, of course, he would get better – but making him the *best* right now, just doesn't sit right with me. I hope you all aren't too disappointed – and don't worry! The next chapter's going to be far more… *light-hearted*.

...please don't hate me

EDIT 04/05/2020 - **Xenolis** made

made

made an *animatic*

I-it's a real animatic

like

fight scene music coolness my words no work oh my God

Worth my Weight in Silver

Chapter Notes

> Hey! I'm here to say that yet another story formed from the Discord (link in the end-endnotes) has been published!
>
> https://archiveofourown.org/works/20520665/chapters/48703118 - **Why Are We Here Again?**
>
> I helped form the idea, and then write the summary and part of the first chapter. From now on, it's under their good management! Go check it out :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There was an awful lot of people in the audience.

Sure, this had been apparent from the beginning – but only now, when Midoriya was standing (*barely*, standing) on the second-place podium, staring at them all, did he really appreciate he sheer *quantity* of people who must have been singing along with him during the final.

He blinked up at them, mouth slightly agape as the crowd roared, clapping, cheering and whistling for them – and for *him*.

Midnight had said something – so had All Might, but Midoriya could barely register it. He was busy panicking about the cameras, flashing lights in his face. They were probably pretty enthralled by Siren, who had refused to leave his side, even when Shinso tried to pull her away. Now the little green canary kept flying circles around Midoriya's head, twittering in excitement – only occasionally landing on his shoulders to hop around the place, still singing in his ear.

All Might was handing out third place medals to Todoroki and Tokoyami, talking to one for a good while before turning to the other.

Midoriya, meanwhile, kept signing little gestures to Shinso, who was standing at the edge of the huddle of students watching the awards ceremony.

[*Sleep*] Midoriya signed.

[*Join the insomniac club*] Shinso replied.

[*No! I want sleep!*]

[*Join us, Canary*]

Another benefit of sign language – communication over a lot of noise and a good distance.

“In second place, Izuku Midoriya!” Midnight suddenly cried.

Midoriya actually jumped into the air at the proclamation, whilst the volume of the crowd increased exponentially and he silently mourned the loss of his headphones.

It was so *loud* – people were standing at they yelled his name and punched the air – making as much noise as humanly possible, so much so that All Might actually had to *wait* for them to calm down a bit before he could talk to Midoriya himself.

He held out the silver medal and slowly lowered it over Midoriya’s head.

Silver had never felt more like gold.

“You put up a remarkable effort, young Midoriya,” All Might told him as he embraced the boy awkwardly.

Midoriya tried not to squirm away at the touch.

Siren must have noticed his discomfort, because she immediately flew right at the number one hero’s face, tweeting furiously at him.

“Feisty little thing, isn’t she?!” All Might laughed heartily.

And with nothing more to say, he left Midoriya’s side to retrieve the gold medal for Kacchan.

As soon as he was no longer hidden behind All Might’s bulk of a body, the crowd cheered louder once more.

[*You’re famous!*] Shinso signed as big and boldly as possible, a big grin plastered on his face.

[*I don’t know if that’s a good thing!*] Midoriya replied nervously.

“And in first place, Katsuki Bakugo!” Midnight announced to the crowd.

But… the cheer for Kacchan was nothing compared to Midoriya’s.

He must have noticed – because rather than letting All Might drape the golden medal over his neck, he simply snatched it off him. His hand gripped the metal as All Might spoke, as if trying to bend it or screw it up into a ball to toss it away.

Midoriya wasn’t sure what All Might had said to Kacchan. Everything was too overwhelming – loud – bright – distracting – that he couldn’t process the distant words that fell from his once-idol’s mouth.

But gold had never felt more like silver.

The students were soon ushered back to their respective changing rooms to pull off their sweaty, and in some cases, rather wrecked, sports uniforms, to finally get back into the comfort of their home clothes.

His mum must have changed whatever Midoriya threw into his bag that morning – perhaps she supposed there was a chance he’d be caught on camera – and for that scenario, she didn’t want him wearing one of this novelty shirts which simply read *dress-shirt* or something. Instead, he had ordinary jeans, a plain, white top and –

He pulled it out of his bag and smiled.

– his Canary jacket.

Shinso scoffed at him. He was wearing a jacket too – but it wasn’t leather and *certainly* didn’t have pockets full of forgotten bird seed.

“Don’t forget your medal,” Shinso pointed out. Siren was trying to pick it up to fly after Midoriya with it – but it was rather heavy, and as soon as she managed to drag it off the table, it plummeted towards the ground and pulled her with it.

Midoriya smiled as he scooped Siren up, put her in his pocket and then went to shove the medal in his bag.

Shinso instead snatched it off him and managed to ring-toss it around his neck, which made both Midoriya and Siren let out a high-pitched note of surprise.

Midoriya reckoned he was getting better at the stares. He had slung his kit bag over one shoulder and had is rucksack over the other. Walking towards the door, his classmates still staring at him in awe – but he managed to ignore this and instead focus on the back of Shinso's head as he threw the door open wide enough to let Midoriya walk through too before it swung closed.

He was smiling – the sunlight glancing off the silver of his medal as it bumped up and down off his chest. Siren was singing – taking little breaks to stuff her beak with bird seed from time to time.

They had the next two days off school. Midoriya was looking forward to that – after the Sports Festival, he was completely *exhausted*. It was Wednesday – that meant he had the radio tomorrow and then Dad would be calling him the day after. Then, he'd be back at school on Saturday and would have to face dance class in the evening, and the same went for Sunday… he wasn't looking forward to that so much. Maybe he'd get lucky. Mrs Kita wasn't far off having her baby, and she would cancel dance lessons for a while after that until a teaching replacement could be found – that would give Midoriya an excuse to miss the lessons and not have to face explaining to the others that he in fact was now a famous (that word still didn't *feel* right to Midoriya) radio star (also felt off to him) with a singing Quirk and then he'd have to face the prospect of speaking to them and –

Shinso grasped the collar of his jacket and pulled him back before Midoriya could walk around the corner.

"W-What?!" he stammered.

"Look…" Shinso replied.

The two cautiously tilted their heads around the corner.

"Oh, wow – that's a lot of people," Midoriya realised.

Other students were stifling their laughter at them as they walked calmly past and out into the streets.

"Good luck there, Canary."

"Oh… Have fun –"

“I suggest *running*.”

Midoriya and Shinso ignored all of them and just stared for a while.

The student exit barricaded a clear path through the crowds and out of the festivities, but either side of those barricades, was a crowd that easily exceeded the size of the one which often swarmed the front of the *radio station* – and that was saying something.

The mob consisted of everything from reporters to sports fans to just general… *fans*. They waved at the UA students walking by, congratulating them on a job well done. Of course, the hero course students got a lot more love than most others, considering their faces were more familiar.

There was a girl from 1-B blushing profusely as she showed off her Quirk to a small group of kids nearby. And Jiro was there too, looking rather stunned as someone waved a pen and notepad at her for her autograph, despite her not getting very far in the tournament round.

“Haven’t the second-year events already started?” Shinso frowned, looking back to Midoriya for answers, as if he just knew *everything*.

[*They must be more interested in seeing us than watching them…*] Midoriya signed slowly in response.

Shinso leaned back, away from the doorway and entrance to the student exit. He sighed, “Great.”

[*Well, we always* could *run*] Midoriya suggested.

Shinso shook his head in disbelief and smacked his hands out of the air to stop him signing anything else foolish.

“Come on then,” he said eventually, “There’s no point in standing here for the rest of the day.” With that, he shoved his own hands in his pockets and marched out of the exit.

There was a little cheer for him when he appeared, like a few of the other tournament competitors had gotten, but nothing more, as he walked calmly away.

Midoriya, however, stayed put, clutching his medal nervously and rubbing his finger over the engravings.

Chirp!

Midoriya blinked down at Siren, who was rather deep inside his pocket, with her beady eyes staring up at him.

“What?” Midoriya whispered. “Have you seen how many people are out there? Look –” He gently removed her from the pocket, holding her out on his flattened palm.

She ruffled her feathers a bit, before hopping around in a circle to look at Midoriya again.

Tweet!

“It was less scary in the stadium!” he protested quietly. The people walking by were still grinning stupidly at him, nudging their friends and pointing him out as he talked with his bird.

Twitter, tweet!

“Huh, what?”

And then Shinso reappeared, sighed deeply, and without warning, pulled him out into the open by his shoulders.

The crowd cheered *much* louder that time. Every single one of them turned to see Midoriya with the canary in his hands – clapping loudly and even whistling in his direction as the camera lights flashed.

Siren, as always, wasn’t at all bothered by the noise (unlike Midoriya) and quickly took flight to do laps around Midoriya’s head as Shinso began to walk away again.

Completely and utterly overwhelmed, Midoriya almost tripped over his own feet as he stumbled to catch up with Shinso and hide behind him – something that he did *not* let him do.

But the people here weren’t *like* those in class 1-C or the rest of UA. They didn’t stare and whisper about the Quirkless boy who had *lied* to them – or the mute one who actually *can* speak. These people just leaned over the barricades and cheered devotedly – pointing at the green wings painted on the back of his leather jacket and the bird flying circles around his head.

Shinso walked a little further ahead of Midoriya, a little smile on his face – one that he couldn’t seem to supress as he turned his head to see his friend glance, stunned, at all the people calling his name and waving at him.

When he mustered up the courage to pull his arms away from his chest and wave feebly back, they cheered even louder.

“Canary, Canary!”

Midoriya turned his head to lay his green eyes on a surprisingly large group of people, making as much noise as they possibly could, laughing and clapping.

Midoriya wouldn’t have done more than wave at them with wide eyes if Siren hadn’t diverted off from her circles in the air to greet them.

“Siren, no!” he hissed and hurried after her as she perched happily on the bar in front of them, singing.

Shinso didn’t stop. He simply shook his head, laughing, and disappeared off into the distance.

“Aw look, she’s so cute!”

“Oh my God – guys, he’s coming!”

Midoriya was tempted to just grab the bird in his fist and take off after Shinso.

“Hi, Canary!” two at the front exclaimed simultaneously. They laughed at each other for a moment before turning back to Midoriya, starry eyed.

Midoriya blinked at them, reaching forwards to try and lever Siren off the bar – which was a tougher job than it sounded. “H-Hi,” he stammered after that failed.

“Hi!” they chorused.

“You did *so* well!”

“I love your singing!”

“Seriously man, I’d *never* have the guts to pull something like that.”

Midoriya’s eyes then zeroed in on what they were *wearing*.

“You like them?!” one exclaimed, pulling at her top.

They all had different variants of it – but each followed a similar pattern. Some had the word *canary* written across them, others were

decorated with birds or feathers. One – which was Midoriya's favourite, thinking back – had *Present Mic* written with the wire to a microphone, whilst *Canary* was below it, with a bird perched on the word, singing into the mic.

Midoriya nodded, flushing red as he did so.

"You don't have any merchandise! So, we made stuff up."

Midoriya was just frozen in place, unsure about what to say or do or –

"Can I have your autograph?!" questioned the one with Midoriya's favourite design, thrusting a pen and notepad at him.

He jumped backwards a little. The *fan* just laughed. "You don't have to if you don't want to!"

"I-I-I… I d-don't have a-an au-auto-autograph," he stammered terribly as Siren flew off his hands to land on top of his head. But he *did* speak! Which was an achievement in itself.

She laughed again, leaning over the barricade as far as she could to give him the pen and paper, "Then make one up! And I can say that I have your very first!"

After a tweet from Siren, with shaking hands, Midoriya accepted the notepad and almost dropped the pen.

He stared at the paper for a moment, before grimacing and just writing the word *Canary* as quickly as possible. But then he hesitated – glancing back and forth between the girl and the paper. After a moment, he put his pen back on the end of the y, and swirled it around, so it ran over the top of the word, and then crossed right through the c, ending with a twirl. It looked roughly like a treble clef.

"I-I hope that's ok," he said, handing the pen and paper back nervously.

She really did drop the pen as she jumped up and down, showing her friends the autograph.

She yelled thank you after Midoriya as he stepped away panickily, looking for Shinso in the crowd of students leaving UA – but his indigo head was nowhere to be seen. Shinso dealt with the pains of social interaction very differently from Midoriya – but at least *he* didn't have a whole mob of people screaming his name and

congratulating him.

After his first interaction though, Midoriya wasn't too keen to stay there long. Not that he wasn't *secretly* enjoying himself – there was just an awful lot of people. And that would mean an awful lot of words. But his mouth seemed to be working at the moment – he would like it to stay that way. That was why he signed very little else – spoke to very few – and then, was gone, blending in with the crowd the best he could, as quickly as he could.

"Izuku?"

Midoriya felt a prod in his arm.

"I-Izuku? Are you awake?"

He groaned as his eyes fluttered open.

"Your friend Shinso's on the phone!" his mum exclaimed, thrusting it in his direction. She seemed generally excited Midoriya had *a friend* and that he'd *actually called to check up on him*.

Midoriya just blinked at her, his brain taking its time to process her words.

He'd fallen asleep on the sofa. After he'd gotten home, he threw off his shoes; hugged his tearful mother; tidied away the copious amount of tissues, and then immediately collapsed.

"Hello?" he moaned across the phone.

He heard Shinso's spluttering laughter, "*It's barely six o'clock – how tired* are *you?"*

"Tired," he replied simply, rubbing his eyes.

"*Then I'm guessing you haven't seen it yet."*

"…Seen what?"

"*My point exactly. Is your phone within arm reach? Because it doesn't sound like you're physically capable of getting up to retrieve it."*

“My phone’s… in my hand…”

“*No. No – that’s your landline.”*

“…Is it?” He pulled the phone away from his ear and stared at it for a couple of seconds. “Oh yeah.”

“Yeah – go back to sleep.”

“No, I want –” he yawned– “to know now.”

“*Then stay on the phone so I can hear your reaction,”* Shinso insisted.

Midoriya didn’t bother questioning the ominousness of that statement as he threw off the blanket that had miraculously appeared at some point and wandered over towards his room.

His mum had already moved his bags into there, so he supposed that was where his phone had gone. However, what first caught his eye when he switched on the light and stepped inside, was not the contents of his bag, strewn across the floor, but was, in fact, Siren’s bird cage.

The door hung ever open, with the little lock twisted in a certain way so it would never swing closed by accident – not that Siren wouldn’t have been able to undo it. Usually, all that her little home consisted of was that cage, her little perch next to it – and the swing inside, above her ‘litter tray’. She was a very neat bird – except when it came to food – because there was bird seed all over the counter and even in her water. Siren also had a bell – which she very much enjoyed ringing instead of Midoriya setting an alarm – or when she insisted, two hours early, that it was time she had more food.

None of the above was out of the ordinary.

What *was* – happened to be a certain something, fashioned into a little ball next to her cage – which Siren was now sitting in the middle of.

The missing headband from the cavalry battle.

She must have stowed it in Midoriya’s backpack so he would carry it home, and then *somehow* emptied the entire contents of his bag in order to retrieve it.

He blinked at her, “Seriously, Siren?” he questioned.

Shinso sighed from across the phone, “*What has she done now?”*

She just tweeted in reply, pulled herself out of the stolen fabric, and flew over to him eagerly.

“I’ve found that headband.”

“…Something is seriously wrong with that bird.”

“I know and I love her for it.”

Midoriya, meanwhile, had chosen to ignore the reappearance of the headband, and went to find somewhere to hang up his medal, which he had yet to take off. It ended up dangling from the side of his bed – mainly because his room was so cluttered anyway, that he really didn’t have anywhere else *to* put it. Siren liked that idea though – she quickly demonstrated its noise making abilities by constantly swinging it side to side so it crashed against his bed periodically.

Further ignoring Siren’s antics, because he’d come to learn at this point, that there were very few ways that he could get her to stop doing it, Midoriya collected together his various things and started to tidy them away.

“*What are you doing?”*

“Tidying.”

“Stop procrastinating and pick up your phone.”

“I’m doing the opposite of procrastinating – I’m being *productive.”*

“You sound dead on your feet – for once in your life, just sit down and stop.”

Midoriya had now tucked the phone between his ear and his shoulder as he smiled down at his and Shinso’s strategy sheets – and promptly used the rather large wad of blue-tack he had collected from his old All Might posters, now hidden under his bed, to pin them up on the wall, covering up the pealing parts of his wallpaper which were once concealed by the posters he no longer had the heart to look at. He needed to get some new ones – maybe some of Present Mic! Of course, he had his collection of photographs from Aozora – and that took up a good amount of space too…

Oh, right yeah, phone.

“Oh, it’s in my pocket,” Midoriya realised as he tipped the bird seed

off it.

"*Of course it is,"* Shinso sighed.

Midoriya hesitated before finally turning on the device.

"Oh no."

"*Let me guess – a lot of notifications?"*

More and more were popping up every second – in fact.

"I… think I might need some time to sort this out."

Shinso snorted, *"Alright fine. Message me when you've finished so I can send you a video I found where someone translated all our sign language conversations."*

"Oh God…"

"*Yep – it's as bad as it sounds. Anyway – have* fun."

And he hung up without another word.

Midoriya hesitated, staring at the silent phone for a moment, before grabbing the back of the wheelie chair currently tucked under his desk (which almost tipped over as he fell into it) and turned on his computer.

As it booted up, he turned back to his own phone. The very first thing he did was delve through the settings and turn off the notifications to his social media.

He sighed in relief once the bombardment had stopped – and then was about to tap on his messaging app when someone started calling him – and he pressed answer before he was able to process who it had been.

"Hello?" he said nervously.

The person on the other end *screamed* in delight, "*YYYEEESSS! MY LITTLE FLEDGLING HAS AWOKEN!"*

Midoriya grinned, "Hi, Aozora."

"*YOU DID SO WELL!"*

"Thank you…" he replied as he turned back to his computer, clicking

on the internet.

"*Everyone's* buzzing *about your final match! It was incredible! You got the entire stadium singing along with you – and me, of course!"*

He struggled to type in the word *Canary* whilst also holding his phone to his ear.

"W-Well, I didn't win."

"*Oh, who cares about that?! You've barely had your Quirk for a* month – *yet you still nearly came out on top! Canary, you're a* star*!"*

Midoriya wasn't sure what emotion to feel when, for the first time, it was not the bird nor the islands that appeared first in his search contents – but *him.*

"*You need to get onto your social media in a minute – post something, anything at all! A picture of Siren with your medal if you want. Oh, and change your profile picture to that awesome shot of you flying above the Sports Festival arena!"*

Midoriya was staring at that particular photograph right now – taken by the drone he had faced high in the air, during his brief match with Kaminari – his green wings spread out either side of him and a great smile across his face.

"Um, what is it at the moment?"

"*Oh, I think it's just the Put Your Hands Up Radio logo. But – have you seen that picture? It's incredible – I'm printing a poster of it."*

"W-Wait, what?!"

"Yeah! And then you've got to sign it – I know you made up a signature – I've seen people bragging about getting one on the internet. It's a good signature as well, nice and neat!"

Midoriya was busy gaping at the news articles – completely dismissing the actual *winner* of the Sports Festival to instead focus on *him* and *his* story.

Relive the Moment – Canary's Shocking Debut

Canary ROCKED It in This Year's UA Sports Festival Finale!

Radio-Star Canary's Identity Revealed!

Replay Canary's Radio Debut

Izuku Midoriya Comes Second Place in UA's First-Year Sports Festival

Top Ten Theories for Canary's Quirk

Izuku Midoriya and Katsuki Bakugo – Who Should Have REALLY Won the Sports Festival?

The TRUE Story Behind Canary

Aozora was babbling on about updating the radio show records and media presence and what Midoriya should be expecting for tomorrow's show as he cautiously clicked on the bottom link.

The TRUE Story Behind Canary

Story written by Hamaki Kimikawa – posted Today at 3:41pm

Second place in this year's UA first-year Sports Festival, Izuku Midoriya, better known by his alias, Canary, has seen a quicker rise to fame than even heroes like Hawks over the past month. His fights have been replayed thousands of times in the short space of time between now and their occurrence. He first became well-known after his start in the ever-popular Canary's Hour – a show featured in Put Your Hands Up Radio on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, along side the pro hero, Present Mic. The public now know Canary as the shy, yet extremely powerful, hero in training, held back in UA's general study class, 1-C.

But why was Canary in that class to begin with? After showing so much potential in the Sports Festival and easily coming out on top of many of UA's hero course students, including Shouto Todoroki, son of the number two hero, Endeavor, one would think that Canary could have effortlessly passed UA's practical entrance exam with flying colours. Not only that, but Present Mic announced during the Sports Festival that Canary was the top of the general studies course, stating that he was their "…resident genius, with some of the highest scores in UA history on [their] theoretical papers…"

The answer to Canary not already being in the hero course is simply – he never took the exam in the first place. Now because he never wanted to be a hero – but because he didn't know he had a Quirk at all.

This fact was first highlighted upon by class 1-A's homeroom teacher, the pro hero Eraser Head, who aided Present Mic with Sports Festival announcements this year. The information compiled about the competitors in the tournament round appeared to be "out of date," suggesting that something had changed in Canary's records rather recently. This change would be the registering of his Quirk in the first place.

How can we confirm this? Well, it all comes down to the nature of Canary's Quirk. Although the specificities of his Quirk have yet to be determined, one fact is clear – it's a voice Quirk.

During a moment briefly caught on camera, at the end of the cavalry battle, we see a conversation between Canary, his friend Hitoshi Shinso, and hero course student, Koji Koda. All three have voice Quirks – and all three appeared to be communicating via sign language (JSL). It is transcribed as such:

We're like Team Voice Quirks.

And all of us communicate via sign language.

And have been mute at some point or another.

Something is seriously wrong with our society.

The key point I would like to highlight here is the term 'mute'.

Has Canary been mute for a good proportion of his life? Would this explain why he was unable to discover his Quirk until after the UA hero course entrance exams had passed? If so, what events led to –

Midoriya closed the tab – not wanting to read anymore rumours or speculations – no matter how true they happened to be.

"*You get all that, Canary?"*

Oh – right, he was still on the phone to Aozora.

"U-Um… I –"

She laughed loudly, "*It's ok! I figured you weren't really listening. A little distracted, are we?"*

"I… Yeah – a little."

"Well, it's ok. You've got the rest of today and tomorrow to be distracted, and the day after too, I think – just make sure you're awake enough for the radio tomorrow evening, got it?!"

"Y-Yes, of course!"

"*Aw, well – see you tomorrow then, little fledgling – that's your name now on my phone by the way – Fledgling."*

"Ha, ha… Thanks…"

"*Bye!"*

"Goodbye…"

Midoriya sighed and threw himself onto his bed – this was proving to be the start of a *long* few days…

He could have just fallen asleep again, right then and there – but firstly, he still needed to sort out the mess that was his phone, and secondly – he'd just managed to jolt himself out of his sleepy state with a sneeze.

He was *allergic* to feathers. Just, when one manages to stick itself up your nose, sneezes are generally to be expected.

He rolled off his bed and onto the floor with a clatter – so much so that he had to yell that he was *fine* to his mum from across the apartment.

It wasn't like his room was *covered* in Siren's feathers. He'd sat through a lecture with the pet-shop-keeper-lady (he never *did* catch her name) about canary diets and mannerisms and moulting seasons and had payed enough attention to know that Siren wouldn't be moulting for at least a few months yet. But that didn't stop her from depositing fluff in various, inconvenient locations or pulling out the occasional feather on accident – she tended to make a big fuss when she did that.

Sighing, Midoriya stared under his bed – only because that was the position he had found himself in – now face to face with some of the All Might merchandise that couldn't quite fit in the boxes, and instead either hung out of them, or were piled clumsily beside them.

He was just blankly looking at a little, chibi All Might, attached to a long, silver chain that Midoriya had never found a purpose for. But as Siren continued to be rather enthralled by noises that banging his medal against his bedside could make – Midoriya finally had an idea.

He grasped the plastic figure, disconnected it from the chain and tossed mini All Might back into one of the boxes. Then, after a moment's thought, he retrieved said box again, and delved through it in search of the bits and pieces he required.

Dotted around his room from his time spent fiddling with his now deceased support items, where various tools and objects that he had bought to help him with the project. Even they found a new purpose as he twisted little bits of metal – removing them from the old merchandise and forcing little holes into them.

He located one of Siren's largest discarded feathers, which she'd left

on his pillow as some kind of gift – and completed his creation moments before his phone buzzed once again.

It managed to vibrate itself off his bed. Staring at it for a moment, he eventually reached down to pick it up.

(5) Unread messages from – Shouto Todoroki

Midoriya blinked at it – ah, yes! He'd given Todoroki his number at the end of the Sports Festival – just before him and Shinso had hurried off to get changed.

This Is the Beginning of Your Chat With ***Shouto Todoroki***

Izuku Midoriya – *Hi! This is Canary!*

Shouto Todoroki *changed your nickname to* ***Canary***

Shouto Todoroki *: Thank you*

Shouto Todoroki: *You looked tired after your match against Bakugo. How are you feeling now?*

Shouto Todoroki: *My father is not too pleased that I lost to you*

Shouto Todoroki *: He doesn't like that song.*

Shouto Todoroki: *It's now his ringtone*

Canary *: Wait, what?*

Canary *: Sorry I just woke up*

Canary *: What… happened?*

Shouto Todoroki *: He isn't very good with technology. So, I changed his*

ringtone to that song you used against me. He can't change it back and now he has to go to work.

Canary: *Oh my God.*

Canary *: You're kidding me*

Shouto Todoroki: *No, I am not.*

Shouto Todoroki: *What was the song you used against Kaminari?*

Canary: *Wait, no! You can't change the subject like that!*

Shouto Todoroki *: Oh, sorry. I just wanted to know.*

Canary *: No, it's fine. It's just… Did you really change Endeavor's ringtone to THAT?!*

Shouto Todoroki: *Yes.*

Canary: *Oh my God.*

Canary: *The first song I used was Wings by Hurts, by the way*

Shouto Todoroki: *Thank you.*

Midoriya stared dumbfounded at the chain of messages for a moment, struggling to process what had just happened. Blinking at his phone – he turned to the other string of notifications that he had yet to examine.

Canary Protection Squad

*This chat group includes Izuku Midoriya {**Canary**}, Hitoshi Shinso {**Raven**}, Ochako Uraraka {**Dove**}, Tenya Iida {**Crane**} and Kyoka Jiro {**Owl**}.*

***Dove** : Wait wait wait no*

***Raven:** I just love how, collectively, no one cares*

***Crane** : Bakugo did win the Sports Festival though!*

***Owl** : Yeah but no one cares*

***Raven:** And I love that*

***Dove** : wait wAIT*

***Owl** : What are we waiting for again?*

***Raven:** Uraraka's looking for a link to something*

***Dove** : [Fan account for our lord and saviour, Siren]*

***Owl** : What the actual heck?*

***Raven** : That is beautiful*

***Canary** : What did I just read?*

***Dove** : CANARY!*

***Dove** : Yay! How are you feeling?*

***Canary** : A little tired, but ok*

***Raven** : Midoriya, you forgot I was talking to you over your landline despite holding the phone in your hands.*

***Owl** : Yeah, that doesn't sound ok.*

***Canary** : I'm tired. I do weird things when I'm tired.*

***Canary** : Speaking of weird things!*

***Canary** : I was talking to Todoroki*

***Owl** : Todoroki? As in, fire and ice, Todoroki?*

***Canary** : Yeah, so anyway, he really liked that song and then he decided to*

***Canary** : actually*

***Canary** : can I add him here?*

***Raven** : Can I first ask how you make friends so easily and yet the only person you've ever mentioned knowing before UA is Bakugo?*

***Owl** : Excuse me what?*

***Crane** : I wasn't aware you and Bakugo knew each other personally!*

***Raven** : Do whatever you want Midoriya. But Todoroki has yet to speak to me and I am bitter.*

***Owl** : You're always bitter*

***Raven** : Shut up*

***Canary** added **Shouto Todoroki** to the chat!*

***Canary** : ok, now tell them what you told me!*

***Shouto Todoroki** : what is this?*

***Crane** : Hello, Todoroki! This is Iida! We have bird names here.*

***Dove** : My idea (Uraraka :D)*

Owl** changed Shouto Todoroki's name to **Phoenix

Raven** changed Phoenix's name to **Penguin

Crane** changed Penguin's name to **Woodpecker

***Dove** : No no no! I've got one*

Dove** changed Woodpecker's name to **Puffin

***Puffin** : Why am I a Puffin?*

***Dove** : Because they're like… Kind of white and red (and black) and it was the best upgrade of penguin that I could think of.*

***Raven** : I prefer Penguin*

***Owl** : That's just because you're still salty about losing*

***Puffin** : oh, is that the brainwasher?*

***Raven** : I have a name*

***Canary** : You know? I'm just going to go and fix my social media account…*

***Raven** : You come back here*

Midoriya sighed exasperatingly as he turned to the task he'd been putting off.

Aozora was right – he'd done hardly anything on the account – but… wow – that was a lot of followers for someone with only one post…

And he'd been tagged in a lot of things to. Everything from Put Your Hands Up Radio – which posted the picture that Aozora had taken not so long ago in order to update the information that the Canary's Hour part of their website displayed – to fans taking photographs of him from the arena, and a couple where he'd nervously agreed to take a selfie with them.

It didn't take long for Midoriya to locate the photo Aozora had specifically identified though – it was on the UA Sports Festival's main account. He gaped at it – not just because it really was a good picture (and even *he* couldn't deny it), but because only the *winners* ever got their photos posted there – and here he was, congratulated for second place shortly after Bakugo was briefly praised for first. The photo of him was far less appealing – with him standing on the podium; staring at his first-place medal, a snarl on his lips.

It took Midoriya a little longer than it perhaps should have for him to figure out how to repost it and then set it as his profile picture… All this media nonsense really wasn't Midoriya's… *style*. But he was helping Present Mic's and Aozora's business, right? And then, of course, *surely* all this attention could convince Principal Nedzu to let him onto the hero course. All he had to do now, was figure out a way to make sure that Shinso would be able to follow…

He stared down at the gift he had made for him. It was a necklace – of sorts. He knew it sounded… *weird*. He didn't expect Shinso to wear it or anything. But Shinso didn't win a medal. Midoriya felt like he should have. Or, at the very least – won a medal for all the good things he'd done for *him*. That was what it was – a medallion, with Siren's green feather as a pendant. He put it around his neck for now – or else he knew he'd completely forget about it.

Tweet, tweet!

Ah – right. One more thing to do.

He turned and grinned.

Siren was back in the nest she'd made out of the ten-million-six-hundred-and-fifteen-point headband. She looked very proud of herself.

Turning to his phone camera and grasping the medal from the side of his bed again, Midoriya placed it gingerly beside her and bent down to take a picture that he was *sure* Aozora would be proud of. But he didn't take it until Siren stubbornly insisted on adjusting the medal's position a little, so it was propped up a little more by the fabric of the headband.

Midoriya shook his head at her as she fluffed out her feathers – she was *posing*. Maybe Principal Nedzu would enjoy meeting her…

He took the photo and *finally* posted it online.

"Izuku! It's time for dinner! I've made Katsudon again!" his mum called across the house.

Midoriya grinned – Katsudon for the third time this week.

He *really* loved Katsudon.

Bakugo's golden medal was sitting on his pillow whilst he perched, cross legged, at the other end of his bed, staring at it. His phone was in his hand – ear plugs in.

He'd been listening to the same two songs on repeat for the last few hours. He knew one – obviously, there were few who *didn't* know that song. But the other…

He hated how much he liked it. And how much more he *would* have liked it if it weren't for the bitter memories that those notes made resurface in his mind.

He could still hear Deku's word echoing in his skull.

They got it the wrong was around!

A *villain*.

All his life, he'd been the *future hero* – the star in the making. Whilst *Deku* was the *nobody* – the one who'd ended up tripping over his own

feet as he failed to chase Bakugo's shadow.

But now it was *his* shadow Bakugo was standing in.

He was in first place.

He was the best of them all.

There was his golden prize.

–and Deku had his silver one.

{Canary's_Aria} *Hello everyone! Thank you for all the support before and after the festival! And to the festival officials – I really hope that you're not still looking for that 10000615-point-headband… because it's here… Siren won't let me take it back so…*

Did they get it the wrong way around?

Chapter End Notes

I realised after posting that my last endnotes were kind of ominous? I swear – it was all innocence. I was scared people would be mad that Midoriya didn't get first place, but of course, the reason why the story has headed in this direction is becoming clear now in *this* chapter, but yeah. I wasn't being sarcastic when I said this chapter would be light-hearted XD

Oh, and the bird names for the group chat are explained as followed:

Uraraka made herself Dove – no one bothered changing it.

Iida was dubbed Crane – as a poor reference to his karate-chopping habit and the fact that he is *too tall*, according to Uraraka.

Jiro became Owl – because they have good hearing.

And Shinso was Raven – because a group of Ravens is called an unkindness and Shinso liked that very much.

On another note.

Cries

I'm still – *sniff* – getting ***fanart*** – and there's so much this time! Thank you so much!

SunsetAnimations has returned once more with another awesome depiction – and this time it's Canary singing We Will Rock You!

And then we've got pretty Canary wings by gostghoul on Discord!

And then **lovypop17**'s back everybody! And this time it's with a

Hatsume!

We have a falling Canary by **ChaoticClueless**

Then **LadyBecca** gives us a Siren on Midoriya's head XD

Melchryn has blessed us with this beautiful picture of Canary and Siren with the headband

Delfis from Discord has also supplied us with a Siren!

Shy Insomniac from Discord drew Midoriya with Siren on his shoulder

And dusk (also from Discord) sent a happy Canary and a happy Siren!

AmyStarSmith (*Discord*) styled Canary like Present Mic!

Then, *finally* – we have Violet (yep – Discord) who drew *me with Siren*

And I know it's not technically Canary related – but **SoftLittleBlanket** also drew my avatar! :D

I'd also like to give a huge thank you for everyone reading and kudo-ing and bookmarking and everything in between! We're almost at 200 people on the Discord – The Mystery of Student no.18 has just succeeded 600 bookmarks, whilst we've just hit 500 over here! And also, can you believe it?! Canary has 1060 subscriptions as I'm writing this! Thank you so much! :D

Fighting for Our Future

Chapter Notes

Welcome to a super long chapter because I have zero self-control.

To be fair though – the word count is high because I have to repeat names a *lot* during things like text messages and radio segments.

But – this chapter, I *swear*, isn't really filler… really?

Err… it sets up stuff – important little stuff – for the future of this story!

A story that I now realise… is over a hundred thousand words…

What is wrong with me?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shinso had never been to Midoriya's house before. So, who could blame him for not expecting Siren to catapult herself into his face the moment he opened the door?

"Siren!" exclaimed two voices at once.

Midoriya pulled the bird off Shinso's face as she chirped contently.

"Is she just your attack bird now or something?" Shinso groaned as Midoriya held the door open for him, and he stepped inside.

Midoriya grinned guiltily at him, releasing the bird into the air again, only for her to fly circles around Shinso's head in the enclosed space.

"So, what have you been doing today?" Shinso questioned as he kicked off his shoes.

"Oh, um, nothing much, really…" he said timidly.

Shinso narrowed his eyes, that couldn't have been a good sign. [*What happened?*] he had to repeat the question twice before Midoriya saw his hand movements.

"Nothing," he replied simply, walking Shinso into a room with the name *Izuku* written on the door. Midoriya immediately collapsed into the bed.

[*Are you sure?*] Shinso pushed, deciding to sit down on the chair that had been tucked underneath his computer desk. Then, accidently jogging his computer mouse, the device flickered into life – and that was an awful lot of tabs.

Who Is Canary? the Answer Will Rock You!

All Things You Need to Know If You Want to Be a True Canary Fan!

Canary Is Less Likely to Enter the Hero Course Than You Might Think

Which Collective Noun Are You?

UA's Sports Festival Finale Was Explosive -- Literally!

What's up with Canary's Bird?

Reasons Why Canary Isn't the Angel He Makes Himself out to Be

Bending the Rules? Why General Studies Students Izuku Midoriya and Hitoshi Shinso Shouldn't Have Gotten so Far Through the Sports Festival

Suspicious Finale, Canary Under Scrutiny for Cheating

Shinso gave Midoriya a look. "You shouldn't be reading this stuff."

Midoriya sat up with a sigh and started to fiddle with what *seemed* to be one of Siren's feathers as a pendant on a necklace.

"It's ridiculous, like – *are* you under scrutiny for cheating?"

"Um, well… n-not that I'm aware of?"

"Exactly," Shinso sighed, "*What's up with Canary's bird?* We're all asking that question buddy, and no one's any closer to the answer."

Midoriya snorted.

"*Reasons why Canary isn't the angel he makes himself out to be?"* Shinso grinned. "I wasn't aware you made yourself out to be an *angel*. You're *still* threatening to go for my eyes every time I call you an angry little bird."

He grinned brightly at Shinso, who smiled back, and then proceeded to close down those endless tabs.

"So, when are we heading off to the radio station?" Shinso questioned.

"As soon as my mum comes back. She went out grocery shopping because… well, I'm delaying leaving the house," Midoriya admitted.

Shinso shrugged, "Fair enough. Is that why you invited me to be your bodyguard?"

"You're not my *bodyguard!"* Midoriya exclaimed. "You said you were bored – so I invited you over for dinner and I forgot about having to do the radio today," he pouted.

"You sure that your… manager person – said that it was ok for me to hang around for the hour?"

"Yeah, Aozora was fine about it. She's excited to meet you."

"Should I be worried?"

"Possibly." He was looking at the photograph of Midoriya with an energetic, blue skinned lady, who Shinso assumed to be this *Aozora* – amongst his growing collection on his wall. She had a very strange smile – and rather pointy teeth.

"What's her Quirk?" Shinso frowned, generally curious.

"No idea," Midoriya replied.

Shinso narrowed his eyes at him – already spying the growing conspiracy in those bright eyes.

"Alright then," he said, deciding it was best to leave the matter be.

Shinso drifted his gaze over Midoriya's small room. Siren had dominated a good amount of it, despite her size – including a lot of his work desk.

"Do you like her nest?" Midoriya grinned, nodding at the bundle of cloth that was the missing headband, and Midoriya's silver medal,

lying beside it. There was a Present Mic pin there too – Shinso was quite certain that wasn't there in Midoriya's picture last night…

"It's like a dragon's hoard," Shinso scoffed as Siren landed in it, puffing out her chest proudly.

"That's what it's turning into," Midoriya agreed with a sigh. "I hadn't planned on letting her keep the medal – but she gets all upset when I move it now, so, I suppose it's staying there."

Shinso grinned, "I love that bird almost as much as my cats."

Midoriya's eyes widened, "You have cats?"

He blinked at him, "There's no way I haven't mentioned this before. I complain about cat hair *all the time*."

"Not to me."

"Ah, well I'm sorry I deprived you of that particular conversation then."

Midoriya laughed, and then looked down at his feather necklace again, faltering, and saying, "Um, well, speaking of medals."

Shinso frowned "…We've already changed topic."

"But *speaking* of –"

"We're not speaking about medals anymore though."

"Shush up and let me speak!" Midoriya exclaimed – turning into angry bird mode. Shinso would have pointed it out but he was slightly fearful of Siren being present. "You… helped me speak," Midoriya explained.

Shinso furrowed his brow but didn't interrupt him.

"You helped me when you didn't need to… all the way back on the first day of school and if you hadn't done that then I would still be really struggling with speaking and I would never have found my Quirk and I –"

"Ok, yeah – you're speaking faster than I can think," Shinso grinned. "What are you trying to say?"

Midoriya simply leaned over and dropped the feather necklace into

Shinso's open hands. "It's for you."

Shinso blinked at it, "For me?"

"Well – I still think you should have got a medal in the Sports Festival. You were more than powerful enough to win – a-and you definitely would have counteracting *my* Quirk, so, there's that… But yeah – you don't actually have to wear it; I was wearing it so I wouldn't forget. But it's… *my* version of a medal… to say… thanks…"

He continued to stare down at it for a moment – at the swirl of metal wire that secured the feather in place – at the neat fastenings of a slightly different colour to the rest. Shinso wasn't sure where he'd gotten the pieces, other than the feather, of course – but either way, it seemed as though Midoriya had gotten them all separately and spent a good amount of time carefully creating the… *medal*.

Shinso smiled. Trust Midoriya to do something like this – so incredibly wholesome and kind. That very thought reminded him though, that he'd never had a real chance at friendship before.

Midoriya would make a brilliant hero – it was what he was *born* to do. From his personality to his Quirk, everything about him *screamed* heroism. But the world hadn't agreed at first. Midoriya was different from the other hero course students. He knew what it felt like to be downtrodden – be told he *couldn't* or *shouldn't*, despite what his heart yearned for. Shinso was exactly the same – and boy, was he glad that, on the first day of school, he'd decided (unknowingly) to be the first to give Midoriya the chance he needed.

The simple gift meant more to Shinso than Midoriya could have ever realised.

"You really don't have to wear it," Midoriya smiled as Shinso fastened it around his neck. "It's more like… a keepsake."

"Too late – I'm never taking it off."

Midoriya continued to stutter in apparent embarrassment for a while, until Shinso changed the subject of the conversation to the internet's love of Siren – which was always a fun topic. That was until Mrs Midoriya returned, and called her son over to help unload the shopping, which Shinso was happy to help with.

"You have to go in a minute!" Mrs Midoriya (who insisted on being called Inko from Shinso anyway) exclaimed. "Go and change, Izuku."

“W-What?” Midoriya stammered, fumbling dangerously with a carton of eggs, “This is fine – I’m only going to the radio station!”

He was wearing his usual set of home clothes – an incredibly oversized T-shirt that was comically labelled exactly that, *T-shirt*, and an ordinary set of trousers.

“Yes, but people know your face now,” Inko acknowledged, “And you might be seen on the way to work. At least put on something that *fits* you.”

Midoriya sighed, but didn’t protest, and quickly hurried back to his room to change.

“Izuku gave you his present then?” smiled Inko as she continued to telekinetically pull items of her shopping across the room. It was a very different Quirk to Midoriya’s – something that Shinso sometimes struggled to get his head around.

“Uh, yeah,” Shinso replied. He was just taking various things from the shopping bags and setting them out on the counter for Inko to tidy away, since he didn’t know where anything belonged himself.

“I-I hope you realise how important of a friend you are to him,” she said, speaking in a slightly hushed voice so that her son wouldn’t hear. “He was in a bad place before he met you,” Inko added sadly. “Y-You know that he didn’t talk – but he wouldn’t eat sometimes too. The only way I got him to leave his room when he didn’t need to be at school was through his dance and music…”

Shinso bit his lip. She clearly didn’t know about Bakugo’s… *suicide* baiting.

“But then he started coming home from UA all happy and smiley – and he would actually *talk* to me about everything; about you and Uraraka and Iida – and then he decided to go out to this nearby beach to play his guitar. He’s done that a few times before – but this time he came back soaking wet and with this beaming smile on his face; his guitar all covered in scorch marks and he’d found his *Quirk,”* she sighed. “You know what happened from there on out.”

Shinso smiled back at her. Yeah, things were really looking up – all they had to do now, was figure out a way to make UA transfer *both* of them onto the hero course.

“Ok, let’s go, let’s go!” Midoriya exclaimed, hurrying back into view –

wearing a yellow hoodie (only *slightly* oversized) and dark blue jeans, with those bulky red shoes of his in his hands, ready to be put on.

“Don’t forget your key card again,” Shinso sighed as he started to walk towards the door.

“Shinso,” Inko called back.

He turned.

“*Thank you*.”

And with a smile, he nodded, following Midoriya out of the house, with Siren whizzing along behind them.

Midoriya practically skipped down the steps from his apartment ahead of Shinso; Siren was singing loudly.

“Did you get your key card in the end?” Shinso questioned after a while as they walked towards the train station.

“Yep!” Midoriya replied, popping the p. “I keep it with my train card now – in the back of my phone case,” he explained, removing his phone from the green, plastic casing to reveal both cards hidden behind it. He shoved the device back into his hoodie pocket.

“Excellent – that way, if you lose one thing – you lose everything,” Shinso grinned.

Midoriya shoved him playfully, “Shut up – I won’t lose my phone.”

“You managed to lose your key card pretty easily.”

“My phone is different! I keep it on me at all times now – with my earphones. How else would I be able to listen to music when I’m bored?”

It didn’t take long for them to reach the station. As they stepped onto the train, Shinso pulled Midoriya’s hood over his head.

He gave him a strange look as they stood as far away from everyone else as possible. It was about half five, so the train was still rather busy.

[*It’s different now, remember?*] Shinso reminded him. [*Keep Siren in your pocket – you might be recognised*]

Shinso heard a slight, disgruntled tweet from the bird who remained hidden beside Midoriya's phone in his pocket, as Midoriya shoved his hand in to keep her still, and nodded to Shinso nervously, ducking his head a little to hide himself from someone standing nearby, who kept glancing over to them.

Shinso began fiddling with the feather around his neck fretfully as he realised that he might be identifiable too.

It wasn't as though it would be *dangerous* to be recognised. It would just be a *major* inconvenience.

A few stops down the line, and they could finally hop off the street. Thankfully, the radio station wasn't that far away – according to Midoriya. Although, Shinso was pretty sure that he got so lost in his music as he walked there, that he wasn't actually aware of time passing by – because, fifteen minutes later, Midoriya yanked on Shinso's arm to pull him to grinding halt.

Ah – now *that* was an inconvenience.

"Didn't you say there was a secret way to get into the radio station?" Shinso whispered as the two stopped and stared at the sheer *volume* of people standing outside the front of the hero agency.

"Y-Yeah…" Midoriya stammered in reply, grabbing Shinso's wrist and pulling him back around to hurry down the street they had just walked up.

He took a left – and then another left and kept running until the two found themselves in a rather desolate area. The only surviving business in what *seemed* to be a row of empty shops, was a small café. The owner of which was clearing one of the tables outside and gave Midoriya a wave from a distance.

"Do they know who you are?" Shinso questioned unsurely as Midoriya led him down a very narrow alleyway opposite the café.

"I think a lot of people from the radio station go there," Midoriya replied as Siren finally freed herself from his pocket and decided to perch on his shoulder instead. "So, yeah – they *must* have figured it out by now… But they close at half six, so I'm often their last customer."

Midoriya's secret passageway really *was* secret. Shinso was pretty sure they'd walked up the fire escape to someone's house at some point. He

hadn't even realised they'd *arrived* until Midoriya pulled his key card out from the back of his phone case to swipe it through a lock at a seemingly insignificant door, and opened it wide before Shinso, grinning wildly as he ushered Shinso inside ahead of him.

"What time is it? Are we late?" Midoriya asked as he pushed past Shinso in the narrow corridor to use his key card a second time on the second door at the far end.

"Err –" he tapped on his phone to check the time– "It's about twenty past six; we're fine."

"Oh, good," he sighed. "Hello, everyone!" Midoriya called out to the receptionists as him and Shinso marched out into the main entrance to the hero agency.

They cheered and clapped, "Hey, it's Canary!" one exclaimed, whilst the other gave him finger guns. "You did great!"

Shinso was busy staring at the front door to the building. The entire wall was made of glass – and he could see the mob standing, waiting, by the door for someone to dare venture close.

"They can't see us," Midoriya explained as Shinso almost stumbled over his shoelaces, making his way towards the receptionists' desk. "It's completely blacked out from the other side."

"Woah –" Finger-guns frowned – "You can't just *sidestep* our conversation about the Sports Festival!"

"Come on, Shinso – you need to register that you're in the building," said Midoriya, sidestepping the conversation.

"Yes, come on, Shinso," grinned the female receptionist, "Come sign in."

"You're doing this on purpose – this isn't fair. Why do you always do this to me? *Every time* we get a celebrity –"

"I-I'm not a *c-celebrity!"* Midoriya suddenly exclaimed, jumping back a little in apparent surprise – even though it *wasn't* a very surprising thing to state.

"Tell that to them," Shinso protested, nodding his head towards the crowd outside, as the receptionist finished transferring his details from the piece of paper he filled out and signed onto her computer.

“Hey, want me to take a picture of you in front of the glass?” Finger-guns (Shinso had given up thinking of a better name) quickly suggested, waving his camera phone at them.

Shinso glanced between Midoriya and the mass of people outside, having no idea they were *right there*. He grinned, “Didn’t the manager lady say to update your social media more often?”

“Aozora,” Midoriya grumbled in response. For someone who had so quickly risen to fame, he remained stubbornly camera shy.

“Go on – it’ll be a good picture!” insisted the receptionist, getting up from behind the desk excitedly.

“U-Um, m-maybe not –” Midoriya stammered, but Shinso just grinned sadistically at him and pushed him over towards the glass.

“Stand there,” he instructed, and hurried back over to Finger-guns’ side.

“Smile!”

Midoriya gave them the most nervous smile Shinso knew he could muster, as well as a feeble wave as he was backdropped by the unknowing mob.

“You can do better than that,” the other receptionist scoffed. “Give us a *real* smile!”

That didn’t do much to help.

Shinso sighed, “Hey, Midoriya – you know you said I should try and activate my Quirk through jokes?”

He blinked at him and nodded uncertainly.

“Why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the other side.”

Midoriya did not smile – and just crossed his arms and pouted.

‘Alright then,’ Shinso thought, *‘Challenge accepted.’*

“Why did the shark cross the road? To get to the other tide.”

Still no smile – but the way his bottom lip wobbled indicated that he was close to it.

“Why did the dodo cross the road?”

He narrowed his eyes as Shinso grinned, probably thinking of what else could possibly rhyme with side and tide.

“It didn’t, it got run over and died.”

The receptionists stared at him.

“Ok – not where I was expecting that to go.”

But Midoriya – knowing Shinso’s odd sense of humour, *finally* spluttered into laughter.

Shinso pulled his own phone out of his pocket and took the successful photograph.

“If you were a villain – you’d be screwed,” Shinso grinned, walking over to him.

Midoriya was still laughing periodically at the morbid joke as the receptionist took a second picture of the two of them, which he sent to Shinso, using the details he’d signed into the building with, not long after.

“It’s almost half past six, you two!” they were suddenly reminded.

Midoriya jumped in surprise, jolting Siren off his shoulder as he panickily steered Shinso towards the elevator on the far side of the room.

As Midoriya pressed on the button for floor thirteen and used his key card to activate it, Shinso wondered aloud, “Why don’t they use elevator music?”

“U-Um… I don’t know?” Midoriya replied, raising his eyebrow uncertainly.

Siren was enjoying experimenting flying around as the elevator moved up.

“Or at least play the radio – this *is* a radio station.”

Midoriya just shrugged as he grasped Siren from the air – stopping her from hurting herself as the elevator came to a stop, and the doors slid open.

“HEY!” cried the blue lady that could *only* have been Aozora. She bounced off the sofa she’d been lying on, scattering paper across the floor as she grabbed Midoriya and hugged him tightly, swaying side to side with him, “You did *so well* – I’m so proud! Oh my God – your face! You’re still covered in plasters! Were you too tired for Recovery Girl to completely patch you up?! Present Mic said that might have happed but *oh* – you did so great anyway!”

Midoriya was struggling to get away from her and Shinso was just enjoying watching.

He was tempted to film – but he valued his eyes.

And if Midoriya didn’t reach angry little bird mode, then Siren would *much* quicker.

He eventually broke free of Aozora’s hold, “Um, Aozora – this is Shinso! Shinso, Aozora.”

She grinned. And it was a scary grin – it stretched a little too far across her face…

“Ah! I’ve been told all about you!” she said. Shinso couldn’t tell if that was a good thing or not. “*Both* of you did incredibly in the Sports Festival! Mic will be out in, like, two seconds – and I’m sure he’ll be –”

“*YYYEEEAAAHHH!”*

“– never mind.”

“CANARY! YOU ROCKED IT!”

“If another person makes that pun – I *swear* I’ll –”

“Angry bird mode,” Shinso sighed.

He turned around to shoot back at him his usual retort but was then smothered by a hug from Present Mic in a similar manner to Aozora.

Speaking of which, Aozora did *not* have the fear of Siren that Shinso had rightfully come to appreciate. She pulled out her phone and started filming Canary pretending to suffocate in the embrace.

“I have control over Present Mic’s social media,” she giggled to Shinso. “If you think that this *isn’t* going on there, then you’d be *wrong.”*

Present Mic was now holding onto Midoriya's shoulders and gently shaking him back and forth whilst screaming about how good he was.

It was good to see Midoriya acting so… *confident*. This was the Midoriya that *Shinso* knew – not the one that he acted like around most others. Here, he wasn't so shy or unsure of himself. He spoke aloud the sassy remarks that he often reverted to sign language to make, so Shinso would have to stifle his laughter. He had now shoved his hand over Present Mic's mouth to stop him from talking and was telling him off for being so biased.

"Speaking of bias!" Present Mic yelled.

The *volume* felt so much more intense in the radio waiting room than it did in the classroom. Shinso felt sorry for Midoriya's ears.

"You did *great*, little listener!" he was pointing at Shinso.

"Me?" he frowned.

He should have seen the – "*YYYEEEAAAHHH!"* – coming.

"Canary *said* you have an awesome ability, but never said what!"

Shinso rubbed the back of his neck nervously, his fingers catching on the clasp of his necklace. "Err, thanks."

"If you both don't get onto the hero course – I'll eat my hair gel!"

The smile that spread across Midoriya's face mimicked Shinso's demonic one *so much* that he almost laughed.

He turned to Aozora, "Please say you got that on camera."

"I see this as a win-win situation," she sniggered.

Present Mic's face fell, "Wait, no, what are you two planning?"

"Three," Shinso corrected. If his teacher was going to eat his hair gel, he *was* going to be there to watch.

"*Oh!"* Aozora suddenly exclaimed, almost dropping her phone. "I've actually got something for you, Canary!"

"Huh?" he frowned.

"Yeah! It's – actually – it's almost six thirty, you two should get into

the studio. You can see it in a bit," she decided, now moving to pick up the paper she'd previously scattered across the room. "Your friend can adopt your nest while he waits!"

"Your… nest?" Shinso repeated.

Everyone pointed at an armchair in the far corner of the room, completely covered in cushions.

Aozora grinned, "He literally goes there every single time he – WAIT!"

Midoriya jumped.

"*Where is your jacket?"*

He blinked at her and smiled nervously, "At… home?"

"*WHY?!"*

"Because it's like a homing beacon saying, I am Canary!"

Aozora opened her mouth, wavered, and then said, "That is a good point."

"Get back in there, you two – the song's about to end," ordered a guy that Shinso hadn't noticed before, wearing headphones and fiddling with an assortment of buttons and levers, set out on a panel in front of a window into the main studio.

"The blinds are open," Midoriya realised with a frown. He must have been referring to the blinds tied up at the top of the window. Perhaps they were usually closed whilst he was in the studio.

"We can close them again if you want," the man offered as Present Mic steered Midoriya towards the door to the studio.

"U-Um, it's o-ok for n-now," he stammered. "B-Bye, Shinso!" he waved as Siren whizzed past the door and it was slammed shut.

Shinso went and immediately collapsed in Midoriya's 'nest', vaguely watching Midoriya and Present Mic talking in the soundproof room.

"Hey, purple!" Aozora suddenly exclaimed. She was sitting in a wheelie chair beside the other guy.

"It's Shinso," he mumbled in reply.

“I need a nickname then!” she insisted with that scary grin of hers. Shinso aspired for *his* grin to strike fear in the hearts of whomever saw it like Aozora’s did.

He hesitated for a moment, briefly considering his very short list of future hero names. But then his phone vibrated in his hand. Todoroki had just sent them a message in the Canary group chat. He’d been sending them a string of updates of his father struggling with his phone and Shinso had saved every single one of them.

“Raven,” he replied.

Aozora gave him a slightly bewildered look.

“Canary has a group chat with me and a few of the hero course students,” Shinso sighed. “One of them – Uraraka, the girl with the gravity Quirk – decided we should all have bird nicknames there – and mine’s Raven.”

“Ok, I love Uraraka.”

Shinso grinned – not just at Aozora – but at the picture of Endeavor moments away from setting his phone on fire.

“Anyway, hey, *Raven!”*

He raised his eyebrows at her.

“Want a pair of headphones to listen to the show?”

Shinso hesitated. The pair Aozora was waving at him *were* wireless. That meant he could still sit in the nest whilst wearing them.

“…Sure.”

Present Mic's Radio Show!

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:30 to 19:30

Canary's Hour

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH!

CANARY: Yay!

PRESENT MIC: Now *that's* more like it!

Canary laughs and Siren twitters in the background

PRESENT MIC: WELCOME BACK to Canary's slow and steady progression to screaming *YYYEEEAAAHHH* with me!

CANARY: Spoiler alert – it's probably not going to happen.

PRESENT MIC: In all seriousness – Welcome back to *Canary's hour!* Where our favourite little co-host has –

CANARY: Bias.

PRESENT MIC: – I'm not being biased!

CANARY: You have other co-hosts!

PRESENT MIC: *Our* – the people listening here are listening for *you!*

CANARY: T-Then shouldn't it be f-favourite *host.*

A brief moment of silence follows

PRESENT MIC: You can tell when Canary's about to insult me because he gets all nervous about it and starts stammering.

CANARY: H-Hey! A-At least I'm t-talking a-at all!

PRESENT MIC: ANYWAY – *as I was saying* – where our *Canary* has just returned to the land of the living after *rocking* it in the Sports Festival!

CANARY: I warned you about the rock pun!

PRESENT MIC: BUT IT'S A GOOD –

CANARY: Siren.

Furious tweeting can be heard

PRESENT MIC: *NOOO!* CALL HER OFF! I won't do the rock pun again, I *swear!*

A sigh of relief after a satisfied chirp and a flutter of feathers

PRESENT MIC: Did you *train her* to be an attack bird?!

CANARY: No – she came like that.

PRESENT MIC: I can believe that.

CANARY: A-And also – what did you mean, *returned to the land of the living?*

PRESENT MIC: I was told you've been asleep!

CANARY: Not this *entire time!*

PRESENT MIC: That, I don't believe.

CANARY: I wasn't in a coma!

PRESENT MIC: You seemed pretty tired during the awards ceremony!

CANARY: I-I – I wasn't – stop looking at me like that! M-My friend's outside the radio studio and – hey! *Stop it!*

PRESENT MIC: Oh, they're signing to each other now. SPEAKING OF WHICH! You two forgot that there are other people in this world who know sign language again, didn't you?!

CANARY: …Maybe.

PRESENT MIC: Because I've been shown *several* videos where your sign language conversations in the Sports Festival have been translated!

CANARY: Ah… yeah – um, my friend told me about those. W-What do I call you on here – your real name or – w-what? Why? Oh, ok –

Raven. We're calling him Raven.

PRESENT MIC: Why is *Raven* your friend's codename?

CANARY: O-Oh, that would be because we k-kind of have a group chat? With me, and Raven and um… three – no, *four* others from school. And, for some reason, they decided that they should all have bird codenames like I do. So, we have Canary, Raven, Dove, Crane, Owl and… Puffin!

PRESENT MIC: …Ok, that's adorable.

CANARY: A-Apart from me and Raven – they're all on the hero course. A-And, they're probably listening, so, hi!

PRESENT MIC: It's Canary's aria!

CANARY: I-Isn't that my social media account name?

PRESENT MIC: Yes! But are these five not your *original* aria?

CANARY: U-Um, four of them a-are. Puffin only joined yesterday… B-But um, yeah – those were the only four who knew that me and C-Canary on the radio show were the same person before the Sports Festival.

PRESENT MIC: What about ME?!

CANARY: I-I wasn't including you!

PRESENT MIC: How did they find out then?!

CANARY: O-Oh, well, Raven was the first to know. I-I told him… then… Owl was next. T-There's a bit of a story behind how she found out…

PRESENT MIC: Tell us then!

CANARY: U-Um, ok! Well, t-to get into the radio show building… place – here – I have this key card. A-And on this particular day, I-I brought it to school with me and… I might have lost it?

A moment of silence

PRESENT MIC: You're looking at me like you expect me to be mad.

CANARY: Y-You're not?

PRESENT MIC: WHY WOULD I BE?! I lose mine all the time!

CANARY: …Your co-producer's glaring at you.

PRESENT MIC: Yes, and I fear for my life – YOU HAVEN'T FINISHED THE STORY!

CANARY: O-Oh, right! Um, basically, me and Raven were searching for it after school, and then we found it – but someone else d-did before us… that didn't make any sense. Someone else found the key card, and we had to try and get it back off her without her r-realising that it was me. Um… And Raven tried to convince her to take it to a teacher – and the argument kind of drew a crowd. I-I *somehow* managed to grab it off her without her realising, and me and Raven ran off. But *Owl* was the only one who saw us do it, and she followed us, and – I think she was going to tell us off for stealing it. S-So, we ended up explaining.

PRESENT MIC: …That sounds like quite an adventure!

CANARY: I-I guess?

PRESENT MIC: What about the others?

CANARY: Oh – Dove tuned into the radio and heard my voice… Then we had to tell Crane before he heard too and accidently gave it away…

PRESENT MIC: On the topic of voice! There are some important things we might want to clear up before we move onto our usual Canary's Hour schedule!

CANARY: T-There are?

A moment of silence follows

CANARY: *Oooh* – yeah…

PRESENT MIC: I just signed an explanation – if anyone's confused by that! I'll let you say – but remember, only if you want to!

CANARY: Um, yeah thanks… Um… There's a lot of rumours and stuff online about… stuff… And, um – yeah, I get why it's weird t-that only four people figured out who I was… B-But, that's because no one really, apart from them, had a-actually *heard* my voice b-before the Sports Festival… b-b-b-because I-I-I…

PRESENT MIC: Do… you want me to finish that?

Silence, likely where Canary nods to Present Mic

PRESENT MIC: Canary here suffers from selective mutism! This is why I offered to let him come on the radio station – to help improve his confidence for him to effectively use his Quirk, which requires his voice to work properly!

CANARY: Thanks to this… I'm getting a lot better.

PRESENT MIC: We've gone down a few decibels. Should I be whispering too?

Siren tweets very loudly into the microphone

PRESENT MIC: NEVER MIND THEN! *Another* thing that we might want to address – is why Canary isn't *already* on the hero course!

CANARY: I-I never took the exam… I didn't know I had a Quirk at all.

PRESENT MIC: But despite that, in the Sports Festival – he absolutely –

CANARY: Don't you dare.

PRESENT MIC: …rocked it?

Canary clicks his fingers and the flapping of Siren's wings can be heard as Present Mic yells

PRESENT MIC: CUE THE MUSIC – CUE THE *MUSIC!*

"CALL HER OFF!" Present Mic screamed, "I repeat! Call her *off!"*

"No! Don't call her off! I'm still filming!" Aozora's voice rang out across the studio as she spoke into the microphone on the other side of the glass, holding up her phone and giggling manically.

[*Well done*] Shinso signed from across the room. He never left the chair, and instead just turned it around slightly so it was at a better angle to see the studio.

[*For what?*] Midoriya replied, continuing to ignore Siren doing what she did best.

He shrugged, [*For managing to explain that*]

[*I didn't do a very good job of it*]

[*You did pretty well for someone who was almost completely mute a few weeks ago*]

Midoriya smiled widely.

"O-Ok, Siren, that's enough," Midoriya told her, after realising he'd left Present Mic at her mercy for a little too long.

He looked rather frazzled after Siren finally backed down. Siren didn't actually *hurt* him – she just enjoyed giving the impression that she was *trying* to. Midoriya didn't doubt that she really *would* go for the eyes if she thought someone was a serious threat. The thought made him sudden uncomfortably.

He looked back to the other side of the glass, Aozora was grinning wickedly as she showed Nakano the video she had taken.

Shinso waved his phone at Midoriya, urging him to pull his own out of his pocket.

Canary Protection Squad

Raven: *You guys listening to the radio?*

Dove: *Oh my God, it's Canary's Hour!*

Owl: *Like always, Shinso, or should I say RAVEN?*

Dove: *We have been mentioned!*

Raven: *Did you only just tune in?*

Dove: *At the end of the bit where he mentioned us yeah*

Dove: *Wait, are you there? At the radio station?*

Raven: *Yeah*

Owl: *Lucky*

Puffin: *My sister told Father how to change his ringtone*

Owl: *It was fun whilst it lasted*

Dove: *Noooooooo!*

Crane: *It would have been too unprofessional to keep it as such for too long*

Raven: *Unprofessional was what we were aiming for*

Canary: *Apparently setting my attack bird on people is unprofessional, but that's not going to stop me from doing it.*

Dove: *Canary! I thought you were on the radio!*

Canary: *I am, I'm waiting for the song to end.*

Owl: *Do you get to pick the music?*

Canary: *No, I think Cockatoo does*

Owl: *Well, you have to show us your arsenal sometime*

Dove: *His arsenal?*

Raven: *The music playlist he has to use his Quirk with*

Dove: *pfft*

Dove: *Good name*

Owl: *Why do I feel like that was Shinso's idea?*

Raven: *That was actually Midoriya's*

Owl: *You're slowly corrupting him*

Raven: *Nah, he came like that.*

Raven: *I'm just making it worse*

Midoriya looked up from his phone and gave Shinso a scowl through the glass.

“Hey, Canary!” Aozora suddenly exclaimed. She had obviously disappeared at one point without Midoriya realising it and had now returned with two boxes in her arms, grinning wildly as she beckoned him to leave the radio room for a moment.

Present Mic assured him that the song they had on would be a long one, and he then quickly scurried out of the room to see her – Siren nestled in his hair as he did so.

Aozora slammed the boxes down on the table near Shinso, gingerly moving the smaller one off the larger one to undo the cardboard and then push it eagerly towards Midoriya.

“W-What is this?” he questioned, peering at the quantity of coloured pieces of paper within the box.

“Fan mail!”

The two boys stared at her.

“W-WHAT?!” Midoriya cried. “B-B-But there’s so much!”

Aozora laughed, “Isn’t it *great?!* Obviously, they don’t know your address, so, they sent it here instead! We need to open a PO box for you.”

“N-No – I-I don’t need a-a – I don’t want *fan mail!”*

She laughed even harder, “Well *tough!”*

Shinso picked up a random letter and grinned at it Midoriya genuinely, “*Wow.”*

“The other box has stuff which I… *don’t think* is fan mail. It *might* be – I don’t know – I obviously haven’t opened any. You’ll have to check yourself.”

“H-How much time do we have left?” Midoriya asked, turning to Present Mic and Nakano across the room.

“About two minutes,” Nakano warned.

Midoriya turned back to the smaller box. The *fan mail* would have to wait. Perching on the side of the armchair Shinso was occupying, he put the box on his lap and opened it – reaching for and ripping open the first letter he set his eyes on.

His eyes widened as he skimmed through it – his heart beating at a million miles per hour.

“What is it?” Shinso questioned, trying to peer over Midoriya’s shoulder to read it too.

But Midoriya had already folded the letter up and shoved it back into the envelope it came from. He tossed it onto the table and began to do the same to several others.

The others seemed rather confused by how frantic Midoriya seemed, until he finally explained, “They’re from hero schools…”

“What?” Shinso frowned.

“Hero schools – other than UA – offering me a place if I can’t transfer onto the hero course!” He pulled out yet another letter. This one was peculiar… it was coloured pitch black, with a white and gold, diamond shaped insignia sealing it closed. He didn’t even need to open it to know who it was from.

Shinso saw it too, “That’s… Shiketsu Academy…”

“The next biggest hero school from UA…” Midoriya finished.

“Not long left now!” Nakano warned.

Shinso gaped at Midoriya, “What are you going to do…?”

Midoriya gripped the black envelope tightly, before shoving it back in the box, along with the others. He hesitated, and then let a grin spread across his face, “You’ll see.”

PRESENT MIC: *YYYYEEE–*

CANARY: I miss my headphones.

PRESENT MIC: *–AAAHHH!* Wait, what?

CANARY: My headphones – they were kind of ruined during the Sports Festival.

PRESENT MIC: And you bring this up now because…?

CANARY: Because I just put on these headphones?

PRESENT MIC: *Oh!* Ok, I get it now.

CANARY: I had to make those from scratch so that I'd be allowed to take them into the event – I spent ages on them… N-Not that I was exactly expecting them to last very long.

PRESENT MIC: That is *very* sad.

CANARY: That was sarcastic.

PRESENT MIC: No, it wasn't! But you can always buy new ones. You don't have to make them this time.

CANARY: I suppose so.

PRESENT MIC: Hey, you know what we haven't done yet?

CANARY: W-What?

PRESENT MIC: YOU NEED TO TELL US A RANDOM FACT!

CANARY: Oh! Um… Oh – did you know that a group of ravens is an unkindness?

PRESENT MIC: I thought that was crows?

CANARY: No, that's murder.

PRESENT MIC: *WHAT?!*

CANARY: A group of crows is called a murder!

PRESENT MIC: …I hate collective nouns.

CANARY: I think they're great!

PRESENT MIC: WELL – why don't we speak to one from your *aria* then?!

CANARY: O-Oh ok!

PRESENT MIC: Cue the ring tone!

Siren repeats the beeping of the ring tone in the background as it plays

LISTENER: HI!

PRESENT MIC: *Wow!* You were quick!

The listener laughs

CANARY: H-Hello!

LISTENER: Nice to *hear you!*

CANARY: Ha, ha… yeah…

Siren tweets enthusiastically in the background

LISTENER: Yeah, I hear you too, Satan!

CANARY: Oh my God – you're –

LISTENER: The pet shop owner who sold you that little bastard – that's me!

PRESENT MIC: Wait, wait, *wait!* YOU sold him Siren?!

LISTENER: That's me! The girl who can't whistle! I'm Tori, by the way – Tori Mikata!

CANARY: N-Nice to officially m-meet you!

LISTENER {TORI}: We've already met! You just couldn't talk to strangers back then, I'm guessing.

CANARY: U-Um, yeah k-k-kind of…

PRESENT MIC: This bird is a nightmare

LISTENER {TORI}: *I know right?!*

Siren tweets aggressively

LISTENER {TORI}: That noise haunts my dreams.

PRESENT MIC: I KNOW THE FEELING!

CANARY: You guys are mean! Siren is amazing.

Siren sings a happy note

LISTENER {TORI}: My life has been made so much easier now that I don't have to deal with chasing that bird around the place every other hour. Did you know that she can *pick locks?*

PRESENT MIC: …Thank you for that information.

LISTENER {TORI}: It's important to know these kinds of things when a sadistic bird is out to get you.

CANARY: Don't listen to them, Siren.

LISTENER {TORI}: Listeners *should* know though; Siren is a weird as hell bird – canaries are not usually like that. So, if you're thinking of getting one – remember that they probably won't be like her!

CANARY: Y-Yeah – Siren's very special.

LISTENER {TORI}: *Special* is a loose term!

PRESENT MIC: Anyway, Tori! Do you have a question for Canary?!

LISTENER {TORI}: Err… I probably should have thought of this earlier… um…

There is a clutter and a crash from the listener's end, followed by a frightened yell

LISTENER: HEY! I'm Washi Tomodachi – and *I* have a question because Tori's being incompetent and now the guinea pigs have escaped.

CANARY: S-Shouldn't you help her?

LISTENER {WASHI}: I've spent way too long chasing after Siren for her – it's her go to capture the escapees.

PRESENT MIC: I can appreciate that logic!

LISTENER {WASHI}: My question is – how come Siren listens to your ever command?

CANARY: O-Oh, she doesn't do that. She tends to only do that when she wants to… She likes attacking people though – so it's easy to get

her to do that!

LISTENER {WASHI}: Are you *sure* your Quirk's only to do with singing? Don't have a secret animal communication ability hidden in there somewhere?

CANARY: No… I just guess.

LISTENER {TORI}: Conspiracy confirmed – Canary can speak to canaries!

LISTENER {WASHI}: You are *impossible.*

PRESENT MIC: Well, *my* question is – do you have a song suggestion for us?!

LISTENER {TORI & WASHI}: YES!

LISTENER {WASHI}: No, you have a *terrible* music taste!

LISTENER {TORI}: Well, I rung up so I –

LISTENER {WASHI}: You missed a guinea pig.

LISTENER {TORI}: Wait, *nooooooo!*

Siren's background singing sounds suspiciously like laughter

LISTENER {WASHI}: Hey, Canary – are *you* going to sing something today? We'd all love to hear your beautiful voice again.

CANARY: I-I-I – well, I don't know, I-I hadn't thought about –

PRESENT MIC: YES – THAT WOULD BE GREAT! Will you, Canary?!

CANARY: I…

Canary sighs

CANARY: Sure.

Present Mic and Washi cheer

PRESENT MIC: Go get ready then, Canary! Whilst our pet shop friends tell us a bit about owning pet birds!

LISTENER {WASHI}: Sure! What do you want to know?

…

PRESENT MIC: And with Washi and Tori off to rescue their *many* escapee creatures – I believe that Canary is ready in his soundproof room!

CANARY: H-Have I told you h-how scary I find t-this?

PRESENT MIC: You don't have to do it if you don't want to!

CANARY: You say that every time…

PRESENT MIC: That's because it's the truth!

CANARY: Well – too late now I-I guess. Oh – Siren's tapping on the window – hello, Siren – I'll be out in a bit!

PRESENT MIC: READY WHEN YOU ARE!

~Fight Song – Rachel Platten~

"*Like a small boat –*"

Midoriya had the blinds pulled down this time – hiding himself from the radio crew in the little soundproof room. Shinso could barely see his shadow through the dusty blinds as he sang along to a tune that he most clearly selected for a reason. He hoped that there were others out there who could understand them.

"*Like how a single word, can make a heart open…*"

Shinso had spent hours with Midoriya – going through songs and trying to find what powers might lurk within them. This was one of them – one of the ones that Shinso now knew every word to. But only now did he really begin to realise how much these words meant to Midoriya.

"*And all those things I didn't say – wrecking balls inside my brain!*"

Shinso looked down at the cardboard boxes full of letters – his eyes lingering on that black envelope.

"*–can you hear my voice this time?"*

With the music ringing in his ears, headphones placed awkwardly over his gelled hair, Shinso reached down and removed that envelope from the box, running his fingers over the Shiketsu seal and the glossy, black paper that the envelope was made from.

He glanced back at all the other letters. There were so many – and although Shinso didn't open any himself, he knew what they were offering Midoriya – places at hero schools from across the country. They saw his potential, realised his growing fame and decided to make a move, in case UA decided not to, or took too long.

"*– my power's turned on –"*

But would he take it?

"*– I'll be strong –"*

Shinso's hands gripped the sides of the black envelope. Would Midoriya take this opportunity? Would he leave him behind? It wasn't that… Shinso was jealous in any way – he just… with Midoriya, he'd finally understood what friendship could be like – and it wasn't just him anymore, there was Jiro, Uraraka, Iida – heck, even *Todoroki*. And he couldn't –

– Wait.

He remembered that sly grin of Midoriya's when some kind of idea drifted across his mind, whilst he put this envelope away.

Oh…

"'Cause I've still got –"

How symbolic...

"– a lot of fight left in me."

Inko was rarely able to call her husband on days other than Friday. It was early in the morning for him – but he didn't mind.

"*– everybody's worried about me…"*

Inko was playing the radio out loud through the house, holding the phone close to the speaker as she tried not to sob.

"*Wow,"* she heard Hisashi breath. "*He sings more beautifully than you do."*

Inko laughed, which quickly turned into tears. She wasn't very good at singing at all.

Nevertheless, in that moment, all three Midoriyas were singing the same tune – despite how far apart they stood.

"*Still believe – yeah I still believe…"*

Jiro had just finished making a social media account by the name of *!_Owl_!*

Now she was prancing around downstairs, playing the music of the radio out loud as she jumped from sofa to sofa, singing along.

"*I will scream them loud tonight! Can you hear my voice this time?!"*

Iida was sitting in the hospital's waiting room.

His glasses kept misting up – at this point, he'd given up, and had taken them off to constantly rub the glass clean with the little cloth he always carried around in his pocket.

"*– prove I'm alright song!"*

He'd known for a while, but the doctors would only be officially confirming it today.

Tensei would never walk again.

"*– I'll be strong…"*

Iida rubbed his eyes as Midoriya's singing continued to fill his ears. They were playing the radio out loud in the hospital.

It *did* bring a smile to his face when the name *Crane* was mentioned, although, it was still *beyond* Iida as to why Uraraka decided upon that particular bird.

Names… *Ingenium*.

Tensei had asked him to take that name… but could he?

"'Cause I've still got, a lot of fight left in me…"

She liked the radio – listened to it over her phone from time to time.

"*A lot of fight left in me…"*

But *oh* – she *liked* Canary.

He was so close to winning! Came out all beaten and bruised and bloody…

She giggled as she skipped along.

She liked that.

"*Like a small boat –"*

Cheater…

"*– on the ocean…"*

He didn't like that Quirk of his.

"*Sending big waves –"*

He didn't like the attention that was drawn to it.

"*– into motion…"*

And he could destroy *anything* he didn't like.

He'd needed to get outside – clear his head. But for some reason, he'd found himself taking his phone and headphones along with him. He'd listened to playlists for a time – but the string of songs had somehow taken him in a full circle – back to the ones Deku sang to him – and then back to the radio.

"I might only have one match…"

Bakugo kicked at the pebble by his feet, sending it skidding across the road as he walked.

"*…But I can make an explosion."*

…Bastard!

"*This is my fight song!"* Midoriya sang, "*Take back my life song!"*

Siren was hopping around on the other side of the window, occasionally peering through the little gaps in the blinds to look at him. She was singing – although Midoriya couldn't quite hear it through the soundproof glass.

"*My power's turned on –"*

He grinned. He felt so *free*, alone in that little room. He could just *forget* how many thousands were listening to his every word, and just enjoy their existence himself, as the barriers that once separated his mind from his mouth continued to crumble, and his control returned.

"And I don't really care if nobody else believes…"

And for once, he really didn't.

"'Cause I've still got a lot of fight left in me!"

But he *would* get onto UA's hero course – and Shinso would too.

"– I've still got a lot of fight left in me…"

He would make sure of that.

Chapter End Notes

Songs used in this chapter:

Fight Song – Rachel Platten – Cover by Travis Atreo

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZ-mNFl065E

Honestly – are you guys *ever* going to run out of art?

I mean – I don't *want* you to… But – still!

Look what Violet drew for my little avatar person! :D

This is what Tori looks like – drawn by **WyvernSpirit**, and then this is her girlfriend Washi! Wyvern made the characters after I did nothing more than ask for a name for the pet shop owner from my Discord peeps XD

lovypop17's back at it again with a super sleepy Midoriya

And **MoonShadowPup** has blessed us all with an accurate representation of our Puffin's conclusion to the similarities between Present Mic's and Canary's Quirks.

But yeah. We're definitely over halfway though the story now. I

want to say, that after this, chapters might start getting a lot shorter…? Then again – as I mentioned earlier – I have no self-control when it comes to chapter lengths so…

Also, the summer holidays are almost over for me – so I'm going to start getting busier again with real life stuff. I don't know if that's going to mean that I won't be able to forever stick to my 'an upload every four days' schedule? I might be fine – I might not. I will warn you though if I decide to change it. It shouldn't be so much of a problem if I cut down on chapter length…

The Mail is Black

Chapter Notes

I have been wanting to do this bit since I started writing Canary.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Did you ever get through all that fan mail?” questioned Shinso.

Jiro had brought a massive umbrella with her, the three of them huddled underneath it in a desperate bid to avoid the downpour.

“You got *fan mail?”* Jiro gaped, “Already?”

“What do you mean, *already?!* I’m surprised I got any at all!” Midoriya exclaimed, almost tripping over his shoes as he struggled to stay under the cover of the umbrella.

“*I* was surprised when my Owl account got so many followers,” said Jiro.

“It’s probably just because of Canary’s following us,” Shinso pointed out. He’d made an account for *Raven* too – not that he’d really done anything with it.

“We still need to convince Iida to make one for Crane... Oh, and then Dove too,” Jiro remembered. “Then that’s everyone.”

“Um, a-are you ever going to tell anyone who you are?” Midoriya questioned as they approached the UA gates.

“Nah – it’s funnier denying it for now.”

“Good morning, everyone!”

The three of them stopped just in time to see Iida charging towards them, decked out with a long, green coat and wellington boats as he ran through the rain.

“Nice raincoat,” Jiro scoffed.

“Why are you all walking so slowly, we’ll be late!” Iida exclaimed, boosting himself past them with his Quirk.

“We’re still five minutes early!” Shinso called after him as they tried their best to catch up, despite huddling under the umbrella.

“UA students should always arrive ten minutes early, don’t you think?!” and he disappeared under the cover of the building.

“I swear, he’s always so intense,” Jiro sighed.

She shook the rainwater off her umbrella as they reached school, chucking it absentmindedly into the umbrella box, labelled 1-A.

Midoriya’s gaze lingered on it for a moment – realising how many students didn’t seem to be worried at all over their umbrellas being stolen or ruined. Midoriya himself had given up on taking umbrellas to school after his first was stolen and his second had *Quirkless* graffitied all over it.

“Have you seen Uraraka this morning?” Shinso questioned Midoriya as he shoved his own raincoat, which proved to not be quite waterproof enough, into his locker.

“Oh, y-yeah. She didn’t have a raincoat so she kind of just ran ahead of me screaming,” Midoriya explained, shaking the water out of his hair. He’d just accepted that he was going to get wet when he left the house that morning, and so was still rather damp when Jiro offered out her umbrella. That was when he heard a rather disgruntled squawk.

“Oh, my God,” Shinso sighed.

“*Oh* – Siren! Why must you be like this?” Midoriya groaned, pulling the bird from his hair.

“I don’t think pets are permitted in the school grounds!” Iida protested as he pulled off his boots and replaced them with his ordinary shoes.

“I’d like to see them try and remove her,” grinned Shinso.

Midoriya just smiled at his bird and ended up tucking her into his pocket where she happily began to clean her feathers.

Speaking of feathers. Shinso hadn’t been joking when he said he would never take off the feather necklace. Midoriya could still see the edge of the chain, mostly concealed by the collar of his uniform.

“Oh, by the way, Iida,” Jiro began, picking up her bag as they all

started to wander up towards the classrooms, “How is your brother? I heard what happened on the news.”

Midoriya looked to Iida with a worried look on his face. With all the panic about Canary, he’d almost missed the articles on Ingenium, Iida’s older brother – who had been critically hurt by the infamous Hero Killer, Stain.

“Ah, there’s no need to worry,” he replied simply. “Everything will be fine.”

Midoriya bit his lip. He wasn’t so sure how much he believed him.

“How about you, Midoriya?” Iida suddenly asked.

Midoriya jumped, “M-Me?”

“Yes. I see you’ve still got some withstanding injuries.”

Midoriya rubbed the bandages on his knuckles, becoming increasingly aware of an itch under the plaster on his chin. “O-Oh, it’s ok. Recovery Girl just couldn’t do much with it all because of how tired I was…”

“You were one of the only ones with many serious injuries,” Jiro recalled. “Maybe Bakugo… Kirishima, that guy from class 1-B – oh and Uraraka. But all the other matches ended pretty quickly or without much conflict… No thanks to you two,” she said, shooting a look at Midoriya and Shinso.

“No hard feelings, right?” Shinso replied.

Jiro smirked, “I suppose –”

Her face fell and eye became blank. Shinso grinned.

“Don’t be mean,” Midoriya pouted at him.

He shook his head and released his hold on her.

She blinked, took a moment to realise what happened and then aimed a sharp earphone jack at him. He ducked and batted it away.

“A-And you too, Iida,” Midoriya interjected. “I’m sorry a-about the Sports Festival and –”

“Honestly, Midoriya, there’s no need to make a fuss over it. It was a

competition! I wouldn't expect any less from someone with ambition equivalent to yours!"

Midoriya blushed furiously.

"Speaking of which," Shinso sighed. "Back to class 1-C, Midoriya."

"O-Oh, right," he said, halting at the door to their classroom.

"I keep forgetting that you two aren't already in our class," said Jiro, twiddling her earphones around her fingers. "We'll see you at lunch or something then, I guess."

"M-Maybe not today," Midoriya suddenly remembered, "Shinso and I might be busy."

Shinso blinked at him, "We are?"

"You'll see."

He connected the dots far quicker than Midoriya had imagined.

"See you both later then," he grinned, and they waved goodbye to the confused hero students, opening the door to class 1-C.

"It's the stars of general studies!" exclaimed one of their classmates as Shinso and Midoriya came into view.

Siren immediately launched herself from Midoriya pocket and flew over to the guy, landing on his desk and staring at him threateningly.

"Err… I don't think you're allowed to have her at school, Canary," Ohchi informed Midoriya cautiously.

"She followed us here," Shinso grumbled in response, all too used to answering Midoriya's questions for him. He was still rather grateful for it.

"Don't you have a cage for her?" questioned Koneko.

Siren fluttered over to her desk next and glared at him as if to say, *I'll put* you *in a cage* – cat*!*

"She doesn't like cages," Midoriya mumbled.

The few who heard Midoriya speak exchanged glances. They'd rarely heard him speak before, of course – and now the whole world knew

the truth about him, or at least, most of it – about his selective muteness and the issues that arose with discovering his Quirk.

The door was thrown open.

"*HHHEEELLLOOO!* Little listeners!" Present Mic cried, hurrying across the room and landing ineptly in his chair, only for it to spin around a couple of times. He slammed his hands on the desk to bring it to a halt. "Are we ready for the register?! Can I get a *yeah?!"*

"YEAH!"

Midoriya jolted in surprise at his classmates' exclamation. He had been too busy watching Siren hop across the floor to reach him again, rather than fly over the others' heads.

"*FINALLY!"* Present Mic shouted joyously. "Took you long enough! Let's see if you can continue being that enthusiastic in the *rollcall!"*

And they were, more or less. His classmates laughed as each of them replied to their name in as unique of a way as possible.

"Isao Kojima?!"

"HERE!"

"*Izuku* Midoriya?!"

He raised his hand.

The whole class stared at him for a moment – Present Mic included. Perhaps they were expecting some kind of sound from him – *anything* at all. Instead, all they got was a little chirp from Siren.

"Is here!" Present Mic said for him eventually. "Hitoshi Shinso?!"

"Present," Shinso replied with far less enthusiasm than the rest of them.

"*Aaaaaand* – Maki Matsumoto?!"

"YEAH!"

"*YYYEEEAAAHHH!"* Present Mic repeated in his ear-splittingly loud fashion. "All present and *correct!* And that's all I have to say! *Except* – Midoriya and Shinso! Principal Nedzu would like to see you at lunch time!"

As the class turned to look at him once more, Midoriya let a small smile creep across his face.

He turned to face Shinso, who smirked, and then signed, [*You were right – as always*]

Midoriya turned back to the front, briefly catching a glimpse of Present Mic's confused expression as he looked down towards his open backpack, sitting by his seat.

The black letter was there – its golden seal staring up at him, delicately kept intact after Midoriya had opened the message the night before.

It was all going according to plan.

"Tea?"

Principal Nedzu was standing on his desk, holding out two cups of green tea to Midoriya and Shinso as they walked in. Both graciously accepted, whether they really wanted it or not, and sat down in the two chairs pulled up to the other side of the Principal's desk.

Tweet, tweet!

"Oh!" the Principal exclaimed as he clambered back down into his seat. Siren had hopped off Midoriya's shoulder to great Nedzu across his desk. "Hello, Siren! Nice to meet all three of you!"

"I-I'm sorry I didn't keep her at home," Midoriya said hastily. His voice was a lot quieter than he would have liked. "But she doesn't like cages."

Nedzu smiled at him in the best way he could, "Neither do I."

Midoriya gulped, for such a short, squeaky sounding little creature, his presence was awfully menacing, especially considering what Midoriya was planning to do and say in the coming minutes.

"On another matter of freedom, how is your selective muteness these days, Midoriya?" Nedzu questioned, pouring himself his own cup of tea. "You seem able to talk to me. Do you believe you are improving?"

Midoriya could *feel* Shinso's sarcastic thoughts.

"I-I-I think so… um, yeah. I am…" he stammered in response.

"I would expect that you would find it harder to start speaking to people who knew you more personally, from before you started improving your capabilities in speech again," Nedzu presumed, sipping his tea.

Midoriya nodded, staring at his shoes.

"But your time at the radio show has shown such a promising improvement already! I look forward to seeing you one day conclude your muteness… a thing of the past."

"Thank you, Sir," Midoriya barely whispered.

"And how about you, Shinso?" the Principal turned to him. "Have you faced any issues at all concerning the nature of your Quirk and the opinions of your classmates during your time here?"

He had – from time to time.

"No, Sir," he answered quickly.

"Good, good!" Nedzu smiled, "How lovely to hear." His eyes followed Siren as she hopped across his desk, glancing curiously at the various things piled there. "Now, I'm sure you're wondering why you're here –"

"– Not really, Sir," were the words that shot out of Midoriya's mouth before he had the chance to think about them.

Nedzu simply continued to smile. "The two of you wish to transfer to the hero course, do you not?"

Midoriya saw Shinso tense up beside him. He tried not to do so himself. He had this under control… right? If he could at least *act* like he did – then perhaps he'd be that much closer to his goal.

"Of course, Midoriya, with your performance in the Sports Festival, we simply cannot ignore you. You have more than proved your potential – and, perhaps after a few more tests, we can transfer you for the start of the next academic year."

Midoriya's heart was beating way too fast. He knew this would be how it would go.

“As for you, Shinso. You also showed us a great power that could be very useful in the field of heroics. However, you didn’t quite get as far in the Sports Festival, and relied heavily on your opponents’ lack of knowledge of your Quirk. You might need further training and time before we can confirm a place in the hero course for you. Does that make sense?”

He didn’t say anything; just stared at Nedzu for a moment, before nervously glancing to Midoriya in the corner of his eye.

“No.”

Nedzu looked back to Midoriya, “No?”

Even Midoriya was surprised by his own proclamation. He quickly shook off the unfamiliarity of the burst of confidence and continued to plough forwards. “N-No, it doesn’t make sense.” He ignored Shinso’s stare as he transfixed his focus onto the man – creature – who could define their future. “We want to be on the hero course specifically *f-for* that training. I-If you delay transferring us, we’ll only fall further behind.”

“A logical conclusion,” Nedzu said calmly. “But good things come with time. Throwing the two of you straight into the intensity of the hero course could prove detrimental to your progress. We wouldn’t want to expose you to more stress and anxiety than necessary – especially for someone like yourself, Midoriya.”

What did he mean by that? His mental health?

“I’m improving,” he reaffirmed.

“Yes, and we wouldn’t want to damage that,” Nedzu nodded. “You’re doing so well. Focus on continuing to recover, and once this year comes to a close, I am positive that you will be ready for the pressures of heroics.”

“What about me?” Shinso breathed. For once, he seemed to be struggling to talk more than Midoriya was.

“As I said, you rely too much on your Quirk. You need skills beyond that if you hope to become a great hero one day. Show us an ambition to improve upon those abilities, and we will be more than happy to have you in the hero course too!”

“And how exactly do I do that?” Shinso pressed.

“Eraser Head said that he saw potential in you too.”

Midoriya was certain that Shinso’s heart skipped a beat in that moment. “Eraser Head? The… class 1-A homeroom teacher?”

Nedzu nodded, that smile had yet to fade from his face. “He believes that you might have a chance as an underground hero, like himself – a hero who avoids the media; focuses on less… *flashy* villains. But ones of equal, if not more, importance, of course. You need to keep the ins and outs of your Quirk under wraps if you want it to be effective, much like Mr Aizawa’s, in a way.”

Midoriya could see a twitch of a smile on Shinso’s face. After Midoriya first mentioned the hero Eraser Head to Shinso, they’d continued to talk about him from time to time. It was clear that Shinso had gone away and researched him himself. He’d become a bit of a fan, although he’d never admit it out loud. But Midoriya was enough of a fan boy himself to recognise when his best friend was becoming one.

“Of course, Midoriya would not work quite as well as an underground hero,” Nedzu chuckled to himself, “the villains would hear you coming. Your Quirk is much flashier – suited for bigger, action-based incidences, or perhaps rescue operations, rather than undercover work. However, thinking of that, you don’t really know an awful lot about your Quirk, do you, Midoriya?”

“N-No… Sorry, Sir.”

“No need to apologise!” he exclaimed, jumping off his chair with the kettle in hand to refill the boys’ presumably empty teacups.

Midoriya quickly drank a good volume of it as to not be rude. Shinso suppressed a snort at Midoriya’s antics and seemed to not bother following his example.

“Your tea’s getting cold, Shinso,” the Principal acknowledged after refilling Midoriya’s hastily emptied cup.

There was a moment of silence as Nedzu strolled back around to his seat.

The three of them had long forgotten about Siren. Meanwhile, she was busy exploring every corner the highly esteemed mammal’s office, blissfully unaware of the seriousness of the meeting.

“For someone who has had such little time with their Quirk, you have

done remarkably well with it. You have shown a profound ability in analysis into it! I suppose that is something you picked up from elsewhere?" Nedzu continued, settling into the conversation so easily that Midoriya wondered why *he* was considered more Human than the Principal was. It was so normal to him. Shouldn't it be normal to Midoriya too? – And not so nerve wracking that he couldn't even trust his head to continue to let the words he needed tumble out into reality?

"I-I used to – I mean, I *still* – like to analyse Quirks, Sir. Specifically, heroes' Quirks… It's kind of a… hobby," Midoriya admitted in a way that made it sound like a crime.

"And a wonderful hobby at that! A pursuit of knowledge purely to satisfy curiosity, rather than to gain greatness. But it seems to have proven useful. Your results in the general studies entrance exam were nothing to sneeze at, after all." The Principal turned back to Shinso again. Midoriya saw his friend dig his nails into his palm as the mammal's gaze met his. "You, however, took the hero course entrance exams, didn't you, Shinso?"

"You would know," Shinso snarled. He probably should have said it in a far less menacing manner.

Principal Nedzu didn't seem to think anything of it though, as he said, "Your theoretical results were also rather good. But you fell more than short on the practical exam."

"I can't use my Quirk on robots," Shinso retorted.

"No. A rather unfortunate drawback."

"It's not a drawback – your exam is just *biased."*

Midoriya knew he should have intervened before Shinso said something he would regret. But he felt a similar anger bubbling in his chest. He let Shinso spit the venom that he wanted to do oh so badly.

"UA likes to flaunt it's success rate in producing top heroes," Shinso continued, gritting his teeth and narrowing his eyes. "But of course, you can – you never give anyone without a flashy power half the chance!"

Nedzu just lent back in his chair and let Shinso keep going. It unnerved Midoriya, but Shinso was persistent.

“Like what Midoriya said – if you want us to improve on *our skills* in order to become heroes. What better way than to put us in the hero course?! Just *waiting* is going to put us even further behind!”

“I’m sorry, Shinso, but the two of you just aren’t ready to enter the hero course right now,” Nedzu sighed. “Present Mic and Eraser Head are both interested in training the two of you separately and out of lesson time. It is a very fortunate situation to be in – you have some of the best tutors in the country in terms of the way your Quirks work and how you need to learn to apply them to heroics. Later in the year, perhaps we can test your improvements by letting you join the occasional hero class and seeing how well you fare. We will officially consider transferring you after that. My decision is final.”

The Principal’s smile wasn’t quite so happy anymore – more, apologetic, and perhaps a little forced.

“Y-Your decision might be final,” Midoriya stammered, putting down his cup of tea; his hand reaching towards the yellow backpack that he had resting by his feet. He’d emptied its contents into his locker earlier that day, so now all that remained inside it were the items necessary for his meeting. “But mine isn’t.”

He stood up, unzipped the bag and poured every letter out onto the Principal’s desk. Midoriya felt little shame in ruining the order of his table.

He tossed the empty bag back onto the floor, once he was sure all the letters had fallen out, and grasped the bold, black envelope from the pile.

Midoriya took a deep breath, and silently prayed, ‘*Voice, don’t fail me now.’*

“T-These,” he began unsteadily, staring at the insignia on the seal, “are from hero schools. Every single one of them.”

Nedzu hadn’t stopped smiling – although it had begun to fade as he gazed over the mass of paper.

“A-And a vast majority of them state that I will be able to transfer to their hero course effective *immediately*, if I-I so wish. B-Because they see potential in me too. But they have taken the initiative to act upon it.”

“Unlike you,” Shinso snapped.

Midoriya swallowed his fear and pressed on, “I could take up any one o-of these offers at any time I like. I could leave UA and become a hero on my own terms.” He was getting louder now; more confident with his speech – he had to be, if this was going to work the way he wanted it to. “*They* are offering to help me get my provisional licence within the year! But if I stay here, in general studies, I might not even be able to pass the next exam first thing next year – because I wouldn’t have received the training I need – that you *said* I need.”

“But if you leave UA,” Nedzu interjected, “what would happen to your position at your radio station?”

‘He’s trying to find weaknesses in my argument,’ Midoriya realised. “I have a contract with them,” he remembered. “Leaving UA wouldn’t make a difference to that.”

“But you would leave the mentorship of Present Mic.”

“You don’t know that I would,” retorted Midoriya. “My place at the radio station gives me a passageway into his hero agency – the option will a-always be there.”

Nedzu hummed thoughtfully as he glanced down at the various letters, “These are all fairly low rate hero courses. Not that they don’t produce admirable heroes – but they don’t get far. Being more… local heroes then someone who could earn themselves a place on the hero ranking.”

“W-Well, firstly, I don’t care about that stuff. Secondly, I-I have enough of a… *fan base* – to get me somewhere despite that – and thirdly–” he waved the black envelope at the Principal– “not all of them are *low rate.”*

He stood up, leaning closer towards Nedzu as he showed him the symbol of the letter, passing it across the desk. “T-This is from Shiketsu Academy, I-I’m sure you’ve heard of it.”

“That I have,” Nedzu agreed, examining the envelope sitting in his paws after placing his cup of tea gingerly down beside the scattered letters.

“That is the school *I choose,”* Midoriya warned. “Your rival school.”

Nedzu’s smile grew a little bit wider, “Interesting…”

“I will go to Shiketsu, and I will tell the world about how little UA did

for me – other than Present Mic… I have the media presence – the popularity – the ability to be *heard*. I can choose to go there and drag your name down with it!"

The creature was showing his teeth now, his smile stretching as far across his face as it could go, "So, this is *blackmail?"*

"W-What?! N-No, of course not!" Midoriya exclaimed, jumping back a little. "W-Well, it is *black* mail but n-not *blackmail*… T-That's a bit extreme – n-no, no – I-I –"

"Tell me your proposition, Midoriya," Nedzu insisted, placing the Shiketsu letter down on top of the little mountain of envelopes before him.

He faltered, before saying, "Let me and Shinso into the hero course – b-by next semester at the latest. *Both* of us. Or else I will leave. A-And… UA will regret turning its back on us."

Silence fell between them for a moment.

Even Siren was quiet. Actually, Midoriya had no idea where Siren *was* so… that didn't really matter.

Nedzu clapped his paws together, positively *beaming* at him, "Wonderful!"

Midoriya blinked at him, "H-Huh?"

"Absolutely wonderful!" he repeated. "I know very few Humans with the confidence to threaten me like that – and with such a well thought out argument in mind too!"

Midoriya was a little too stunned to reply, so Shinso took his place, "So? What will you do?"

"Well, it appears my decision has been made for me. If you can undertake a situation as stressful as this and find you are not only still able to talk but have the ability to propose such a daring agreement, then you are more than ready to take on the pressures of the hero course!"

Midoriya felt like he was about to pass out – but he wasn't about to make that problem known.

"Of course, the issue still stands that the two of you are far behind the

other hero course students. So, this is my proposition. You might be aware that, in the week after next, for the first time, first-year students will be taking internships under heroes who have reached out to us. What you do *not* know, is that I have had certain heroes approaching me to ask if *Canary* is available for them. However, we simply cannot agree to such matters. You are not in the hero course *yet* – the paperwork isn't in place, and then comes the slight matter of insurance and governmental permissions and caretaking… No, we cannot allow you two to take part in an internship like the others will," Nedzu explained.

He had gotten up off his chair again, and was standing on his desk, retrieving Midoriya's copious amounts of letters to pile them neatly in front of him.

"*But*, with the hero students away on internships, our lovely members of staff don't have their lessons to teach! I have been looking into it, and have come to the satisfying conclusion that, by alternating through UA teachers, both of you can have a week of study under their supervision, in a very similar method to the rest of the hero course."

Wait – *what?!*

"That way, they will be able to review your abilities, and perhaps begin to refine them! If you can agree with me that transferring *next* semester will be a benefit to us all – especially considering the paperwork and issues surrounding what course materials you need to know – we can make the transfer official then! As long as our teachers each agree that you both are as capable as I believe you can be, after the week is over."

Midoriya shakily accepted the stack of envelopes from Nedzu, and gently put them back into his bag, along with the Shiketsu letter – almost squishing Siren in the process, who had reappeared in the backpack at some point during the meeting.

"By staying in general studies for the rest of *this* semester though, you will be slightly ahead of your hero course peers. That will give you the chance to catch up on the hero topics you fall behind on. Especially since you are fluent in English, Midoriya – and your grades show that you are not so bad yourself, Shinso. Perhaps you are picking up some skills from Midoriya already?"

"Wait, hold on," Shinso interjected, shuffling forwards in his chair.

“What are we doing again?”

“I will need to confirm and organise a few things first. But I should have a timetable organised, at the very latest, by the end of next week,” Nedzu grinned. He was now sitting back in his tall chair, his beady eyes glinting at him in amusement as he gazed upon their confused expressions. “Our UA heroes will assess your abilities during the internship week, and then you must pass your exams at the end of the semester for your current, general studies department. You can then join our hero course students in their summer camp in order to make an acquaintance with them – only to officially join this coming semester.”

They stared at him, mouths agape.

“Well?” he said, cocking his head to one side. “Are we in agreement?”

In a bit of a daze, Midoriya and Shinso followed a singing Siren down to the lunch hall.

Shinso was so shocked that, for the first time, *Midoriya* had to order food for *him*. It was hard to read the expression on Lunch Rush’s face when Midoriya spoke – but he was pretty sure it was a smile.

After paying, the two of them (well, three, if you counted Siren) were waved down by Uraraka, across the hall.

The table was big enough for the six of them – right in the corner of the hall, not far from where Shinso and Midoriya used to sit alone at the beginning of the term. But, somehow, it was the first time all six had been truly together.

“So, you *were* busy?” Jiro pushed as soon as they sat down.

“What happened – was it a meeting with Principal Nedzu?!” guessed Uraraka.

“Did it go well?” Iida asked.

“Will you be transferred into class 1-A?” questioned Todoroki.

Shinso didn’t even notice Siren almost crash landing into his food as

he slowly turned to Midoriya, “Err, care to explain?”

Midoriya spluttered into laughter.

“What just happened?” Shinso wondered aloud, starting to laugh nervously alongside Midoriya. “What the heck did you just *do?!”*

“Don’t leave us hanging!” Uraraka protested. She’d dropped her chopsticks, leaning across the table as if getting closer to them might somehow convince them to tell her what happened quicker.

Shinso pointed at Midoriya accusingly, “I think this bastard just blackmailed the Principal!”

“WHAT?!” they all cried at once.

“N-No!” Midoriya laughed uncontrollably. “*Shinso!* That’s not what happened!”

“Then what *did?!”*

“You were *there!”*

“And I’m as clueless as anyone!”

Todoroki raised his hand leisurely, “I’m confused.”

“You’re *always* confused,” Jiro interjected.

“I-I think…” Midoriya breathed, staring at each of his friends in turn with a bewildered smile across his face, “I think we just got onto the hero course!”

Chapter End Notes

Sighs in ordinary chapter length.

Ok, so – the small matter of song suggestions…

A lot of them are great! Don’t get me wrong – the occasional idea is really useful! Quite a few of the songs I have used are in those specific places in the story because someone mentioned them and I decided to move them around.

However – It's getting a *little bit* much now XD

I did say on the *very first chapter* that I didn't want any song suggestions. I have a never-ending list of them now – and I've pretty much already planned out *everything* that I'm going to use. More suggestions and ideas aren't going to change that – probably… Anyway! If you have more suggestions, or just want to ask my opinion on what power a certain song gives, *I* suggest heading to the Discord instead! Unless of course, I doubt my song choices later on and ask for second opinions… but yeah – just thought I'd put this out there :)

ART!

MoonPaw17 drew Shinso with his feather necklace!

And look at this cute little Midoriya and Siren by Rin

lovypop17 reappeared – as always, and this picture is, and I quote, "If Izuku saw a plane and realised he never needed to take one ever again if he could use his quirk legally."

Then Pigeonal doodled a happy singing Midoriya

And finally, 69%Fear drew Midoriya and Shinso! :D

Distractions

Chapter Notes

Looks at the chapter plan
“Ok, ok – 40 chapters, we can do this.”
Watches as the chapter count slowly rises
“This is… never going to end, is it?”

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*This is the beginning of your chat with **Mina Ashido***

*Mina Ashido changed her name to **Alien Queen***

Izuku Midoriya: *Thank you*

Alien Queen** changed your name to **Canary

Alien Queen: *excUSEEEEEEEE ME???*

Alien Queen: *and you decide to just IGNORE this little detail whilst I ramble on about CANARY during dance class and you just sit IDLY by???*

Alien Queen: *Good job in the Sports Festival by the way – you totally killed it!*

Alien Queen: *Or should I say*

Alien Queen: *ROCKED IT*

Alien Queen: *Please don’t send Siren to murder me*

Alien Queen: *That bird is terrifying*

*Alien Queen changed her name to **Pinky***

Pinky: *Hey! You not coming to dance class today??*

Pinky: *I guess I'll just have to see you tomorrow then! The others are so totally DYING to talk to you!*

Pinky: *WHERE ARE YOU???*

Pinky: *ANSWER MEEEEEEEEEE*

Pinky: *I see you over there*

Pinky: *I SEE YOU CHECK YOUR PHONE DON'T YOU IGNORE ME*

Pinky: *…*

Pinky: *Ok what are you doing?*

Pinky: *I saw you and purple (Raven???) go into the support labs*

Pinky: *Ochako won't tell me anythinnnnggggggg DX*

Pinky: *I rung up the radio station but I didn't get through*

Pinky: **sad violin music**

Pinky: *Hey wait, didn't you once say you could play the violin???*

Pinky: *Oh my God that would be so cool in dance!*

Pinky: *You better not be ghosting me*

Pinky: *IF YOU DON'T TURN UP TO DANCE TODAY YOU'RE IN SO*

MUCH TROUBLE MISTER!

Pinky: *Fine dON'T THEN*

Pinky *changed your name to* ***rUDE***

Pinky: *Last chance to turn up to dance before I delete your number*

Pinky: *I'm kidding*

Pinky: *I would never do that*

rUDE: *I'M SO SORRY*

Pinky: *yOU bETTeR bE*

Pinky: *I had to fight autocorrect to get that anger capitalism*

Pinky: *…That's not the right word to use there, is it?*

Pinky: *Anyway, thAT'S HOW ANGRY I AM*

rUDE: *I swear I didn't ignore you on purpose!*

Pinky: *I'm standing in dance waiting for you so you BETTER SHOW UP*

rUDE: *I WILL I PROMISE*

rUDE: *I just had to fix the notifications on my phone so it would stop attacking me all day and I must have messed yours up somehow!*

rUDE: *Please believe me!*

Pinky: *…fine.*

Pinky *changed your name to* ***Canary***

Pinky: *You have FIVE MINUTES to turn up to dance before I change your name to something WORSE*

Canary: *I'M RUNNING*

Pinky: *YOU BETTER*

Midoriya actually *did* run.

Siren thought that was funny though, because it meant she could fly faster beside him.

The last week had been extremely busy for Midoriya – and Shinso too.

In between lessons, they had hurried over to the support class, in a desperate bid to put together the support items they wanted and *needed* for their hero costumes. Fortunately, neither of them required anything all too flashy for the costumes themselves, and so less work had to be put into it for now.

The whole idea of making a *hero costume* still felt surreal to Midoriya (and probably to Shinso too, even if he tried not to show how excited he was). They hadn't submitted official hero names yet or anything. Apparently they couldn't do that until they were enrolled officially in the hero course. But it didn't matter to Midoriya – he would be Canary, no matter what.

His whole body felt lighter as he thought about what tomorrow would bring.

Him and Shinso had been given their schedule for the week ahead only a couple of days ago. But Midoriya couldn't help but read it over and over again.

On Monday, the two of them would be at UA, under the supervision of the teachers of UA whenever they had the time. Midoriya knew it was bound to be difficult. Probably consisting of a full day work out – testing the limits of both of their Quirks before dragging their sorry bodies home. But that didn't make him feel any less excited.

They'd spend the next five days under the tutelage of one teacher per day, with the exception of Present Mic, who had them on both Tuesday *and* Thursday. But that was probably because it made it easier for Midoriya to head straight to the radio station in the evening – considering he was already there. When Aozora heard the news, she became rather excited over the prospect of having Canary in for more hours – or even slotting Shinso into the official Canary's Hour if he felt like it.

Shinso, however, was more looking forward to Wednesday, which was *Eraser Head's* day. He kept denying he'd become a fan – but Midoriya knew better.

With all the thoughts of the coming week buzzing through his mind, Midoriya reached the outside of the dance studio in seemingly no time at all. Panting, he came to a halt, tightening his grip on his guitar's case. He would have taken his violin if he'd seen Mina's messages earlier – but he'd only noticed them once he was about halfway to the dance studio, scrolling absentmindedly through his phone.

"Don't cause too much of a fuss, Siren," Midoriya warned. Then, after catching his breath, he pulled open the door and hurried inside.

He could hear the distant sound of the scuffing of shoes against the dance floor – a cheerful chattering voice that could only belong to Mina, or perhaps Megumi; she was just as talkative.

One of the lightbulbs was broken – its flickering light filled the corridor as Midoriya walked hesitantly towards the door that led to the room where his dance class was held. He wasn't so sure why he felt so nervous, as he clutched the door handle and let it cautiously creak open. But he could feel his heart thumping frantically – threatening to burst free of the prison that was his ribcage. His hands were shaking as he pushed the door open a little further, his eyes settling on the people he was so used to spending his weekends with. Perhaps he was frightened of what they'd think of him – how they'd react to being kept in the dark. That was one of the reasons why he'd put off going back to dance after the Sports Festival…

They didn't see him at first. He tip-toed in and hurried to his usual seat in the corner of the room, beside Mrs Kita.

Then Mina spotted him.

"CANARY!" she cried.

Midoriya winced as the rest of the class immediately stopped what they were doing to stare at him.

He gave opened his mouth to say *hi* – or *something* – but all he got was an unsatisfying squeak. He flushed red and ended up just waving feebly.

"I *told* you he hadn't given up on us!" Mina exclaimed happily, jumping up and down gleefully, before catching a glimpse of the little green bird and jumping back a little in legitimate *fear*. "A-And you brought your *bird… great."*

Siren chirped at her innocently from Midoriya's shoulder – as if she *hadn't* attacked her on live television during Mina's match against Koda.

"How lovely to see you again, Izuku," Mrs Kita sighed, her hand resting over her stomach as she grinned at him. She couldn't have been far from having her baby now – she looked about ready to *burst*. "I'm assuming you've recovered after the Sports Festival now?"

Midoriya smiled and nodded, both hands clutching the handle of his instrument's case in front of him.

After punching rocks in Kacchan's direction during the final, he'd developed cuts and bruises all over his knuckles. In the heat of the moment, the pain barely registered in him. But it had been over a week now; barely any indication of the injury remained.

Speaking of which – that was something else Midoriya had recently added to his hero costume – a sort of mouth guard. There had been a *killer* bruise on his jaw after Bakugo had punched him there. It was the only injury that Recovery Girl really healed for him, considering how tired he was.

"I heard your singing!" Megumi exclaimed, waving her arms about in excitement, "On the radio *and* in the Sports Festival – oh my God you were *so cool!* How come you've never told us any of this before?!"

Midoriya backed up a little, tensing as he held his guitar closer to his chest. He tried to explain that he simply *couldn't* but… well, he couldn't even do it *then*.

It was so *frustrating*. He didn't feel in control. His throat would close up without a moment's notice sometimes; no matter how much he wanted to speak, sometimes he just *couldn't*. It was like Nedzu had said, it's harder to speak to people who have, for so long, known you as the kid *without* a voice. Change was hard.

"You know, I should have realised it was you," said Kasumi. She glanced at Midoriya in the mirror unsurely as she continued her stretches. "I just haven't heard your voice in such a long time… I sort of, forgot what it sounded like."

"What she said," added Yuuto, pointing his thumb at her after a moment's hesitation.

Midoriya didn't trust himself to reply without cracking all over the place or stuttering so much that they could barely understand. He gave in to the silence, put his guitar on the floor, and signed to his dance teacher so she could translate.

She faltered a little before explaining, "[My voice is unreliable. I'm sorry, but I don't seem to be able to speak to you today]"

Megumi seemed a little lost, "What's *that* supposed to mean?!"

"You have selective muteness, do you not?" recalled Mika as she did her hair up into a tight bun.

Midoriya nodded, focusing his gaze on Siren, who was now perched on top of his guitar case, staring back at him with as worried an expression as a bird could convey.

"We understand that it might take a while for you to overcome those barriers," Mika continued, glaring at Megumi as a warning that she was unintentionally being a little rude.

Megumi wavered, "O-Oh, right, yeah – of course, I'm sorry…"

Midoriya gave them a nervous smile as he let his shoulders relax a little, hoping they would understand.

"Are you going to dance with us today?!" Mina questioned, changing the subject, to Midoriya's relief. "You need to show me how you used

those awesome moves against the guys in the festival!"

Midoriya blinked at her for a moment, before quickly undoing his guitar case and holding up the slightly scorched instrument for them all to see.

"Oh, yay!" Megumi exclaimed, bouncing on her toes, "It's been too long since we last had you play for us!"

He sat down on the bench, fingers brushing across the burnt patches of the wood of his instrument before he began tuning it as quietly as he could.

Usually, at this point, his dance-mates would get back to their stretching, waiting for Midoriya to finish up. But this time, they were far more transfixed on *him* than anything else. As if they were trying to match *Canary* with the quiet, little Izuku they had known for so long.

His guitar was quite out of tune. He hadn't had the time to use it for a while. Eventually, Kasumi looked away from Midoriya and the little bird perched on the end of his guitar and turned back to her teacher, bringing the entire class back to reality along with her.

"Um, Mrs Kita?" she started, clearing her throat. "At school, we've been looking at incorporating Quirks into our dances – what do you think about mine?"

Midoriya knew about Kasumi's Quirk too – probably more – but he didn't mention it. They'd talked about it, long ago – and Midoriya remembers Quirk details well. In fact, now he thinks about it, all these facts and figures that stick so well in his head, *might* be a hidden aspect of his Quirk… That's an interesting thought – in terms of remembering lyrics, that is. Perhaps he retains information so well *because* his Quirk needs him to remember the lines to specific songs. Although, often the lyrics don't come to him until the music begins and he starts singing, but maybe that's because –

Mrs Kita had stopped talking – and everyone was staring at him again.

"What?" fell from his mouth at a very low volume – he hadn't even processed saying it!

"You were *mumbling*," Mina grinned.

The blackness of her eyes made her grin a little scary. But Midoriya

had been exposed to all sorts of scary grins, and Mina's didn't even beat *Shinso's*, let alone Aozora's… but that *really* isn't an important thing to be thinking about at the moment.

"You're still doing it!" she laughed.

Midoriya flushed red. He wasn't used to this – the attention, the *talking*. Mumbling was certainly new… he'd mouthed his thoughts before – even signed them, but not said them *out loud*.

Mrs Kita cleared her throat to continue her conversation with Kasumi, gratefully pulling at least *her* gaze away from Midoriya. "–try to pull your mist around yourself. It's a delicate phenomenon, so move as such. Perhaps you could follow Mika's lead – she has a style which fits that well."

Kasumi smiled thinly. She *never* liked following in someone else's footsteps. "May I use my Quirk here?" she questioned after a moment's thought.

Their dance teacher grinned widely and nodded. She'd never been too strict on those kind of rules… "Go on, Izuku – you can start playing whenever you like."

Midoriya blinked and refocused on the fact that he was supposed to be playing his guitar. But what to play? Something… something useful for Kasumi – she was the only one who was whole-heartedly serious in dance…

~Africa – Toto~

Mina gasped loudly when he started playing it, "Oh my God! Is this the rains in Africa one? I can never get the lyrics – English is so darn difficult in music sometimes…"

"Yes! I *love* this song!" Megumi squealed, clapping as she hurried to the edge of the dance floor. She pulled Mina along with her, leaving Mika to dance with Yuuto in the middle, and for Kasumi to watch irritably from behind, forming a veil of mist around her as she began to move.

The song was *meaningful* for Kasumi, yes – Midoriya was getting rather

good at finding adequate meanings within music. However, *tempo* was still something he had to work on. It was an issue he came across in the Sports Festival too, specifically in Todoroki's fight. The song he chose there was… just a little too slow. He found himself moving as slow as the music did. Whether that was a legitimate side effect of his Quirk, or just a habit he'd picked up from dance, he didn't know for sure. That was the biggest problem he had with sleeping songs. Nearly all of them were too slow and mellow, or took long to reach the chorus, and thus the power. *This* song, however, was a little too fast and upbeat for the style that Kasumi wanted. She didn't seem to mind though. Perhaps Midoriya was just over thinking things, as per usual.

He felt himself humming the tune of the song alongside his guitar playing. Mrs Kita smiled fondly at him, before turning back to her dancers.

The lyrics were right there, on the tip of his tongue. '*The moonlit wings reflect the stars that guide me towards salvation…'*

Mina and Megumi were having a whale of a time – giggling and trying to trip each other over in time to the beat. Mika, like always, simply slipped into the music effortlessly, coordinating her movements with Yuuto extraordinarily well despite his lack of self-confidence (at least it was better than Midoriya's). Then there was Kasumi, who certainly took the spotlight. She had some control over her mist as it curled around her like fabric; silks defying the laws of gravity.

Hm – thinking of which. What if he brought someone like *Uraraka* to dance class? Or Jiro or Shinso. Oh my God – Iida would be hilarious. Todoroki would have no idea what he was doing. He often didn't.

A smile stretched across his face at the thought as he reached the chorus of the song, the tune still falling subconsciously from his lips.

Although… if he dragged them to dance, they'd be here with Mina. Not that Mina wasn't nice! She just… Midoriya didn't feel as close to her as he did with the others. Midoriya was happy to spend time with her occasionally; he certainly wouldn't deny the fact that she was his friend! But… She was just a little too loud and energetic; didn't really think about what she was saying before she let it out of her mouth.

"I bless the rains down in Africa…"

Speaking of that exact problem – Mina and Megumi had stopped trying to trip each other over, mainly because they were focusing too much on the fact that Midoriya was *singing,* and Siren was too – but he

hadn't realised it yet. He was too lost in thought, strumming the chords through muscle memory more than a conscious attempt. He learnt this song in guitar lessons *ages* ago. It was probably why it came to mind so easily.

Mina cried out in surprise as she tripped over her own shoelace and Megumi burst into laughter. She managed to catch herself though, falling into one of her favourite breakdancing moves which most *certainly* didn't match the song – but it wasn't as though she seemed to care much.

Kasumi rolled her eyes at them, drawing back in some of the mist that she'd lost to the air in a brief lapse of concentration. The whole room was rather humid now because of it – but no one seemed to pay much attention to the problem, even though the mirrors had started to fog up – and a layer of Kasumi's water vapour had collected on the ceiling like clouds… about to…

Before the next verse started, Midoriya's guitar played faded – slowing to a halt.

The dancers each turned and frowned at him in confusion, "Are you alright, Izuku?" questioned Mika.

A droplet of water fell onto her nose. She jumped back in surprise and looked up. That wasn't Kasumi's mist – they were clouds, *real*, grey storm clouds, shifting and churning above them.

Siren tweeted at him, not realising anything was wrong at all. But everyone else did.

"Kasumi, is that your Quirk?" Yuuto breathed.

Midoriya shrank back, clutching the fret of his guitar nervously as he watched the occasional, weirdly warm raindrop fall from the ceiling.

'*Oh my God – what would have happened if I kept going until the second chorus?!'* Midoriya's mind screamed. He could have *flooded* the place!

What if he'd sung something else? What if he hadn't considered what power it would give – only for it to be far worse than a bit of water…?

It was then when a profound realisation washed over Midoriya – something which hung heavy in his heart even when he walked home, not long later at the end of the lesson (when the windows had been opened and the clouds had faded, with surprisingly, no withstanding

water damage to the building) –

– there were some songs, he could *never* sing.

"I can't believe we actually managed to get here," Shinso whispered as he gazed down at his hero costume – and the support item they'd spent all of last week designing with Hatsume. He had a *hero* costume.

Midoriya beamed at him. Stroking Siren gingerly.

Shinso tucked his feather necklace under the padded, purple and black top of his hero costume. "Did I ever say thank you?"

Midoriya blinked, "You didn't have to."

"No, I really, really do," he responded. "All I ever did for you was *talk* to you. And *you* just got me a ticket onto one of the best hero courses in the *country."*

"Well, no one *else* talked to me," Midoriya pouted, clearly confused by Shinso's words. "And if you *hadn't* talked to me – I wouldn't have been able to talk to anyone else and I never would have found my Quirk and I never would have been here anyway. I suppose it was… a joint effort."

Shinso was still pretty convinced he didn't do much to help, but he knew he wouldn't be able to convince Midoriya otherwise. "Come on then," he insisted. "The teachers are waiting for us outside."

The smile returned to Midoriya's expression in full force as he leapt off the bench he was perched on, tossing Siren into the air in the process, and practically skipped out of the changing room behind Shinso.

They had been instructed to get changed into the hero costumes the two of them had been designing all last week, and then make their way out to a green to the side of the main school. Shinso wasn't sure what emotion to feel when he saw Present Mic and *Eraser Head* standing there, waiting for them – so he opted for suppressing all of them instead.

"*YYYEEEAAAHHH!"* Present Mic yelled at the top of his lungs, scaring

a number of birds away from the trees a short distance away. Siren didn't seem bothered – neither did Midoriya, who usually flinched at the slightest raise in volume. Shinso supposed he'd grown used to Present Mic's outbursts. "WE'RE REALLY AT THE STARTING LINE NOW! AND LOOK AT THOSE *HERO COSTUMES!"*

"Volume," Eraser Head groaned to his fellow hero as Shinso and Midoriya came to a halt before them.

"I'm gonna be real sad when you two leave my class!" Present Mic admitted, "I'm just happy you'll still be in my English lessons –" he shot Midoriya a look – *"You better be in my English lessons."*

Midoriya just grinned sheepishly and shrugged. He had just about as much of an idea of what was going on as Shinso did.

"They won't necessarily be moving *yet*," Eraser Head snapped.

Midoriya's smile didn't waver. From all the stories that he and Shinso had heard from their class 1-A friends, they knew Eraser Head was strict; expected the best – but was also well-known for his *logical ruses*. However, it was sometimes hard to tell the difference between his sincerity, and just a lie to get them more motivated. Best to treat all threats as far from empty, as to avoid the worst possibility.

"Today is about assessing your base-line skills," Shinso's favourite hero, Eraser Head continued. "Both of you have powerful Quirks, but there will be times where you won't be able to use them. We're going to do a basic fitness test." He tossed a softball at Midoriya. Shinso caught it before it could hit him in the face. "I did the same thing with my hero course students – except they were allowed to use their Quirks. The only reason why you won't be using yours is because Shinso's has no physical usage here, and Midoriya – I've been told yours has a limit."

As Shinso tossed the softball between his hands, Midoriya nodded, blushing.

"We want to focus on testing your Quirks later!" Present Mic announced eagerly. "No need to tire you out at the start of the day!"

"But I don't expect you to be slacking off," Eraser Head snapped. "I expelled the student who came last in these tests. If you don't beat his score, you have no business being here either."

Shinso wasn't phased by the threat; instead, he felt as determined as

ever – and Midoriya seemed to be too.

Eraser Head grinned.

On a scale of angry Midoriya to Aozora – it was high up there on the creepy factor.

Shinso grinned back.

“It’ll help you get used to your hero costumes too,” Eraser Head added after a moment’s thought. He was about to turn when he faltered, glanced back, and added, “They’re good, by the way – simple and practical.”

Midoriya snorted at Shinso as soon as their teachers turned away again.

“What?” he hissed back.

“Nothing!” Midoriya whispered, hurrying ahead of Shinso.

Shinso hesitated, glancing at the softball in his hand for a moment. He smiled – but then he remembered.

Earlier that day, Midoriya had mentioned thinking about quitting dance…

He was back to his happy, smiling self now – but all morning so far, he’d seemed really… *bothered* by something.

“Are you coming, kid?”

Shinso almost jumped; wrenched out of his thoughts by the call, he rushed forwards, ready to toss the ball as far as he possibly could.

He would worry about Midoriya later – right now, both of them needed to focus on one thing, and one thing only –

Impressing Eraser Head.

“Someone’s a little *distracted,”* Midnight grinned at Midoriya, who had just pulled himself back up off the floor with shaking arms.

They'd been *sparring*, for lack of a better word, since lunch. That was when Shinso disappeared, as he was dragged off unceremoniously by Mr Aizawa, who had him tangled up in his capture weapon.

His *face* when Eraser Head complimented the simplicity of Shinso's costume – was *priceless*.

Present Mic was pretty ecstatic when he saw Midoriya's costume too – but he didn't count.

He wore his leather jacket – the one with the green wings on the back – mainly because he'd gotten way too attached. Shinso swore that Midoriya almost cried (Midoriya denied it…) when they sent it away to be modified slightly by an official design company. All they did was improve its fire resistance, durability; even giving it water proofing – but that didn't stop Midoriya being absolutely *relieved* when it was returned in one piece (after meeting Hatsume, he wasn't sure how much he trusted support companies to stick to the memo). He could zip it up if he wanted, but often found he over heated, especially with all his dancing around. Underneath was a green top, sort of the same colour as his hair and the wings. It was kind of padded – like Shinso's was, except his was purple and black. Midoriya strongly suspected both of them were developed by the same person – considering how similar they were.

Other than that, he had a new and improved version of his headphones and mp3 player device…thing. It was wireless this time – which saved a bit of trouble – and also a lot easier to use. Oh, and his mouthguard. By some magic that Midoriya had yet to fully understand, the entire thing was *retractable* – and could disappear into a more compact version secured around his neck. Mr Power Loader had said it made the guard a little weaker, but the modification was important because having such a chunky support item dangling around your neck alongside the headphones when he wasn't using them, was bound to become a bit of a problem over time. Apparently, he expected Midoriya to want to change it all later on – but Midoriya had yet to find a fault with it.

"Earth to Canary?" Midnight sighed. "Are you ok?"

"S-Sorry…" Midoriya muttered in reply, pulling a particularly long strand of hair away from his eyes. "I-I was just… thinking…"

Midnight put her hands on her hips, narrowing her eyes at him. "About what, exactly? Something more important than *me?"*

“I-I-I’m sorry!” Midoriya stuttered panickily. “It’s just…” he fiddled nervously with his headphones as his mind wandered away from his hero costume, and back to the incident on Sunday. “I was at… dance – yesterday, and I –”

Midnight actually squealed, jumping up and down a little.

Midoriya stared at her, dumbfounded.

“I keep forgetting that you dance – it’s so darn *cute!”*

He flushed furiously and kicked at the ground. “Y-Yeah… Well, o-on Sundays, I often play an instrument rather than actually *dance* –”

Midoriya ignored Midnight’s excitement over that this time.

“– and I ended up playing this song… but then… Well I-I made it *rain – inside*.”

Midnight had stopped acting so over enthusiastic; a concerned look spread over her face as she walked a little closer to him.

“I-It was fine. I stopped before anything really bad happened… but… It made me think – what if I’d been singing something with a power that… w-what if I *hurt* someone?”

Midnight gave him a meek smile, patting him tentatively on the head. “Many people with powerful Quirks face problems like that,” she explained. “You worry about making a mistake; activating it unintentionally. I used to worry a lot about sending not just the villain, but civilians unconscious too with my Quirk.”

“No, no…” Midoriya sighed, stepping away from her. “W-Well, yeah – that’s a problem too. But I mean… there are songs out there – *a lot* of songs – that I can never, *ever* sing.”

Silence fell between them for a moment, as they each followed their own train of thought.

Midnight had taking over in Midoriya’s *training* from a string of other teachers earlier that morning. He’d seen Mr Aizawa, of course, and he and Shinso somehow survived his endless physical tests. Then Present Mic, who forced them to do vocal exercises (which mortified both of them). But what Midoriya was currently flashing back to, was his earlier training with Cementos. They’d been testing his Quirk’s more destructive capabilities against the hero’s *constructive* power. With

everything that Midoriya could do to *cement* – what could he do to *people?*

“You know…” Midnight began. Midoriya narrowed his eyes at her when a worryingly wide smile stretched across her face. “There are an awful lot of songs about *love.”*

“No,” Midoriya said immediately, “No, no, *no* –”

“Yes!” she shrieked. “Oh, you are too perfect. There’s no way I’m letting Mic keep you all to himself.”

“T-There’s no *way* that I am *ever* singing a-a… *love* song!”

“Oh, I can’t *wait* until Friday – you and your friend are stuck with *me* then!”

Midoriya silently prayed Friday could somehow be skipped all together. Looking back, only one thought crossed Midoriya’s mind:

Careful what you wish for.

Chapter End Notes

Songs used in this chapter:

Africa - Toto - Guitar cover by James Bartholomew

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAAnlSEVk94

Art time!

Lovypop17's still at it – and I honestly don't know *how* at this point. But take this sweet little picture of Canary and Shinso!

Then Devine from Discord doodled the *blackmail*.

Look at what NadirTom did - pretty Canary wings!

And finally, pidgeonat has blessed us with yet another Canary sketch, circled by their own doodles that I shall not edit out because they're cute.

And yeah, I know this was a bit of a filler chapter. We've reached a point of the story where I'm not one hundred percent sure what's going on? XD – I kind of just summarised this bit in one sentence in my chapter plan and that wasn't a very good idea… But, here we are! And I'm just going to plough through it and hope we come out the other side in the right place XD

Thank you for reading anyway! We've just exceeded 600 bookmarks, which is super amazing. And I will warn you, I *do* read all of the bookmark notes. And, argoko…? What the heck is that? That is *792 words long* – and you keep adding to it. Yes, I *see that* – and Katieturnbur? Don't follow their example! They are *c r a z y*

But thanks – it's adorable; I love it XD

A Taste of the Future

Chapter Notes

> Hi, yeah – when I said, please may you pretty please stop giving me song suggestions.
>
> ***Please***
>
> *stop giving me stop suggestions.*
>
> *Drowns in the song suggestions.*
>
> *pLEASE*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya quit dance.

It took a lot of convincing for his mum to even give him the telephone so he could ring Mrs Kita, informing her that he wouldn't be coming back. However, a check on the dance class' small social media account informed Midoriya that Mrs Kita would be stopping her dance lessons anyway, considering she was expecting in a few weeks' time. That

meant the whole ordeal was sorted *for* him. There was no *way* he'd keep going if there was an unfamiliar teacher there – someone who likely didn't know sign and would know Midoriya as *Canary* and not *Izuku*.

Maybe he'd go back, given some time. He just needed space – space to get used to his new… way of life, so to speak – getting comfortable with his fame and his Quirk and, most importantly, his *talking*.

With the thought hanging heavy in his mind, Midoriya hopped on the train to reach the radio station that morning, rather than going to UA. It was only when he gave up his seat to a frazzled looking mother and her child, that he looked across the train and spotted Shinso's head of indigo hair.

With only one stop left, Midoriya decided against pushing his way through the crowd of people to reach his friend, and instead just hurried along vaguely behind him one the train stopped – rushing up escalators and weaving his way through the steady stream of people to finally catch up with him.

Together, they walked to the *front* entrance of the hero agency for once. Since it wasn't Canary's Hour, nor was there any particularly famous guests in the building, the persisting mob of press that often hovered outside the building had dissipated.

They were immediately greeted by Aozora.

"WHAT'S UP, HERO FLEDGLINGS?!" she yelled, and with a swift kick, she sent the boxes that held their hero costumes skidding across the polished floor towards them.

There was someone else standing next to her that Midoriya didn't recognise – clearly a hero, judging from his costume. "Be careful with those," he told Aozora in a hushed voice.

"They're *hero costumes,"* Aozora protested, "Count it as durability testing."

The hero sighed, rubbing his temples in exasperation.

"THIS –" Aozora exclaimed suddenly, dramatically pointing at the white- and grey-haired man beside her, "– is Static! *I* do the radio stuff; Static does the super-secret hero stuff. And then you that know Present Mic does, like, the *main* hero stuff."

Static opened his mouth to say something, but Aozora threw her arms open excitably, unknowingly cutting him off.

“Static and I used to be co-workers in our emergency line call centre! Until he got his proper hero licence, that is. But, hey! *Canary* knows all about our hero agency – but *Raven* doesn’t!”

Midoriya wasn’t at all discouraged by the fact that he would have to sit through an explanation of how things worked around here for a third time. So, when Aozora told the two of them to run off and get changed into their hero costumes, he practically skipped the entire way, a warm, buzzing feeling rising in his chest as the matter dawned over him that, for the first time, Canary was becoming more than just a radio star.

Shinso could see himself working here.

He could visualise graduating UA and becoming a sidekick for *Present Mic*, alongside Midoriya. Oh God, if someone told him that he’d be considering this in the future, he’d brainwash them to throw themselves into the nearest fountain.

Of course, Present Mic’s hero agency didn’t seem to work in the same way as most others. Present Mic was the main hero – the head of the operation, and the main presence in the public eye. He went out on patrols; had a few sidekicks that did the same, alongside having their own, slightly less popular radio sections across the day. However, the real focus of the hero agency relied heavily on the radio station. By ensuring its popularity, those who listened to the radio would have a specific number drilled into their minds – a sort of emergency contact for people to call if they need a hero for a more… *delicate* situation. Anything from mental health problems to serious, domestic abuse cases. They don’t always send out a response team – sometimes just relying on those in the call centre to give those on the other side someone to talk to.

Overall, the agency had two main response teams – Present Mic’s, and an underground team called White-Noise; working closely with the police and a host of other, independent heroes from time to time in a well-managed network that Shinso had yet to properly get his head around.

But now, sitting alone in a quiet office, a cold, sinking feeling came over him as he realised something that perhaps should have been obvious from the start.

He and Midoriya would become very different heroes indeed.

Shinso fiddled with his feather necklace as he mulled over the thought. Would they grow apart because of it – as Midoriya waltzed out into the spotlight of action-based heroism and Shinso slipped into the darkness that underground heroes shrouded themselves in? Would he have to drop his *Raven* persona in favour of something more secretive; unknown to the general public and the threats he may come to face?

“Your head is filled with fog.”

Shinso *didn’t* jump at the sound.

Static walked into the room, pacing around him in a (likely unintentionally) menacing manner.

“You are so used to filling other people’s minds with it, that you don’t realise when your thoughts consume your own,” Static accused, sitting down in the chair beside him.

Midoriya had been dragged off by Present Mic about half-an-hour ago now, to join him on patrol. Shinso felt sorry for him. He, however, had been left to Static – someone Shinso still knew very little about.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Shinso responded, tucking the feather back under his top; hiding the necklace’s thin chain with his bulky, black and yellow voice changer. He hadn’t really had the chance to use it much yet – but was looking forward to putting his only support item to good use. Well, not *only*… There was still the small matter of what Eraser Head had proposed teaching to him yesterday…

“What were you thinking about?” Static pressed, pulling at his fingerless, black gloves absentmindedly.

Shinso hesitated before sighing deeply. “My Quirk means I’m of the most use… *unknown* to the world.”

“But you wish to be seen?” Static assumed.

Shinso shrugged, “Not really. I don’t care about the fame – I know that

Canary doesn't either but… well, that's the whole problem."

"You are concerned about being associated with your famous friend, and thus brought out into the light yourself," the hero concluded.

He wasn't quite sure how to respond – or why they were having this conversation in the first place. But Shinso had a feeling that Static was all too used to dealing with other people's troubles.

"A tricky one," Static admitted. "However, let us say… for example – in the future you become rather well-known as an underground hero. I have been told of that voice changer of yours – a very useful invention indeed. If you can learn to creep up on people and interject into their conversation, unbeknownst to them, you will still be able to work effectively, despite them knowing of your abilities. Learn the correct skills and methods of combat, and you will find yourself useful in all kinds of heroic ambitions. This is true of any hero, with any Quirk."

Shinso leant back into his chair. It was a good point.

"Alternatively, you could come to separate yourself from your hero persona. You have a mask of sorts – that hides your face. Perhaps you could change your hair – that's the only other thing I see that really makes you stand out."

Another good point – but no one would be touching Shinso's hair. Siren wouldn't be pleased anyway. It wasn't as much of a literal *bird's nest* as Midoriya's was – but she had still come to enjoy sitting in it from time to time.

Besides, according to Midoriya, Eraser Head would be far more effective at capturing villains if his hair didn't show off when he activated his Quirk – but that didn't stop him from growing it out.

"But let us focus on the present rather than the future, for now, shall we?"

Shinso cleared his throat and nodded, sitting upright again.

"Unfortunately, I cannot show you a great deal of our operations here at White-Noise. Many of the situations we come to face are very… fragile. We can't risk anyone other than professionals meddling with them," Static explained. "In the meantime, we can –"

He suddenly put his hand up, as if to stop Shinso was saying anything as he put his other hand to his ear. There was an earpiece concealed

there, Shinso quickly noticed. He sat in silence for a moment, listening intently to whoever was on the other side. “Understood,” was all he mumbled in response.

He leapt to his feet, about to rush towards the door when he hesitated, and looked back at Shinso.

“Are you coming?”

Shinso had no idea what was going on – but if it meant what he thought it did, then he was all in. He stood up so quickly that the chair was almost sent toppling over. He ran behind Static, fastening his *persona cords* (which was what he had eventually dubbed as the name of his voice changing support item) over the bottom half of his face. Only then did he let himself grin.

Static didn’t go for the elevator, and instead used his key card to access the stairs, which he jumped down more than two at a time.

“The problem is with our emergency number–” Static called back as he continued to run. They had been on the fourth floor, so at least they didn’t have too far to go – “is that sometimes, people call us instead of the police when they need help a little more urgently!”

He ran out through the front door to the agency, with Shinso sprinting along behind him as they charged through the streets.

“Especially kids – when they listen to the radio often and register our contact as someone to call instead of the normal 119!”

People darted out of the way as they came hurtling past. Shinso couldn’t help but think about how much easier this could have been if they’d taken to the roof tops… Eraser Head’s scarf really *would* be a good thing to come to master…

They hadn’t gone far when Static came to a screeching halt, holding his hand up to his ear again. After a moment, he turned back to Shinso to explain. “One of my team managed to contact some other local heroes who were on patrol nearby. It’s a hostage situation, attacking a local business just off the high street. We’re not sure what provoked it – but there’s a young kid in there, which makes the matter all the more serious.”

Shinso nodded once more as Static turned and started running once more, seemingly unsure of the direction he was heading in as he constantly checked with his operator, taking sharp corners and

doubling back more than once.

“Hey, Static!”

Static finally stopped before a rather muscular hero and his similarly dressed sidekick, just outside the back of a *dental practitioner’s*, of all things.

“Death Arms,” Static nodded at the hero. “Mind re-affirming the details of the situation?”

He turned around, glancing down at a second sidekick huddled up against the wall, with her – wait, *Jiro?!*

“Well, Earphone Jack?” the gruff man questioned.

She faltered for a moment before replying, unplugging herself from the wall. “From what I can hear – there are three villains, two holding hostages on this side of the building, and a third shouting at someone on from across the hall.”

She did a double take as she saw Shinso there beside Static. Of course, she’d never seen his hero costume before; only heard vague details of what he’d planned on it looking like.

“Right, if we take on the villains here – Static, can you take down the third?” Death Arms questioned.

Static nodded. “Which is the best way in?” he questioned Jiro.

“Err,” she replied, glancing back to the building. “I think there was a window from the other side.”

Death Arms nodded with an approving smile on his face, “Hm – and your intern?”

Static looked back to Shinso, “Will come with me,” he declared. “Give us twenty seconds to locate the window.”

“Good, Earphone Jack – can you check how many hostages are present?” Death Arms continued as Shinso hesitantly followed Static around the corner.

“Ah, right!”

Jiro was right about the window. It was open only slightly, so the heated argument whoever was inside was having could be heard

clearly –

“Just think about what you’re doing!” a man shouted.

“*No* – it is *you* would should be having second thoughts!” retorted a rather distort sounding woman.

Static peered carefully through the window, glancing for only a second before turning back to Shinso, and using… *sign language*.

[*We have a female villain, holding the child I mentioned as a hostage whilst she speaks with the Dentist*] he quickly explained. [*I will use my Quirk on her and climb through the window. Follow me and take the child away*]

Shinso nodded surely, trying to hide the bubble of frenzied emotions rising in his chest.

Static turned to look inside once more, but then –

“W-What was that?” the woman’s voice wobbled. Then she laughed, “Is someone *there* – I saw you outside the *window*…”

Static didn’t seem too fearful, but Shinso was quick to assume he was hiding it.

“Come out where I can see you!” she demanded.

When Shinso heard the distant whimper of the hostage, he raised his hand to his persona cords, fiddling with the mechanism as quickly as he could.

“Hey, no wait – *please!”* the man exclaimed.

Now Shinso had his voice.

Static opened the window further as he marched into view, before raising his hands slowly above his head.

“Don’t come an *inch* closer!” the villain cried.

Shinso took a deep breath and – with a voice that wasn’t his own – said, “*Darling, please! Can you calm down?!”*

“DON’T YOU *DARLING* ME –”

There was a moment’s silence before Static flung himself through the

window, urging Shinso to follow.

His eyes settled upon the scene for the first time.

A red-haired woman stood, blank faced near the window. The kid had clearly fallen from her grasp and had now scurried to the other side of the dental chair, whilst the Dentist himself, stood in absolute shock, now far from him.

“Everything’s going to be ok,” Static told the two of them in such a convincing tone that even Shinso felt calmer.

As the tearful Dentist started spluttering his thanks, Static turned back to Shinso. “How long does that last?”

“U-Um,” Shinso started, turning off his device again, “indefinitely unless –”

There was a crash and a bang from the other side of the wall – probably where Death Arms and his sidekick were. And from the shelves above the villain’s head, a framed photo came tumbling down – landing on her feet.

She yelped in pain, breaking free from her trance, and immediately lunged towards Shinso, who stood, defenceless, right beside her – about to grasp his face with glowing hot hands when –

She shrieked a second time, falling to the floor and clutching her own head in clear *agony*, un-phased by her own Quirk.

Static’s hand was outstretched towards her. There was a moment of further screaming, until silence fell over them once more, and the woman lay unconscious at his feet.

Midoriya’s mouth fell open.

They were sitting in the waiting room outside the main radio studio. Shinso had just finished telling him all about his rather eventful morning.

Shinso sat and waited for the inevitable bombardment of questions as he took off his voice changer and placed the mask gently on the table

beside him.

But the words that eventually fell out of Midoriya's mouth were, "So, what's Static's Quirk?"

Shinso facepalmed.

"W-What?!"

"Of course, *that's* what you ask me first," Shinso sighed.

"B-But I want to know!"

Shinso just stared at him in disbelief as Midoriya gazed back with his big, green eyes as he desperately pleaded for an answer. Shinso was surprised he hadn't already somehow teleported a notebook to himself to write endless facts on it all.

Midoriya shuffled forwards in his armchair – or the, *nest*, as everyone insists it's called – waiting for Shinso's response.

He simply sighed again, "I don't know, something about using filling someone's head with some kind of static sound."

"A-And he amplified it to the extent where the villain passed out?!" Midoriya assumed. "That's amazing! I bet he's really good at creating distractions – I wonder how many people he can use it on at a time! Oh, and does he activate it? Was it sight? Not touch, definitely not... Maybe just proximity? What if he used it whilst fighting someone? It would be really hard to attack and evade properly if your head was filled with static. Oh! What if –"

"You know," Shinso interjected, stopping Midoriya from spiralling into one of his endless tangents on Quirks, "for someone who has been mute for so long – you really are making up for it now."

Midoriya blushed and grinned sheepishly at him, "S-Sorry…"

"Why are you apologising? I said you talk a lot – that's the *opposite* of a bad thing in your case."

Midoriya just pulled Siren from his hair, paying close attention to any feathers sticking up the wrong way rather than acknowledging any sort of positive feedback thrown in his direction whatsoever.

"So, what have you been doing today?" Shinso questioned after a moment of silence between them. "I thought I'd see you at lunch – but

I didn't."

"O-Oh, yeah, I-I'm sorry," Midoriya muttered, apologising *again*. "I just ended up being super busy," he laughed nervously.

"You went on patrol with Present Mic, right?" Shinso recalled, as he turned to lie down on the sofa he had been perched on.

"Y-Yeah! That was… terrifying."

Shinso snorted, failing to supress his laughter.

"It's not funny!" Midoriya protested. "T-There were so many people and they all wanted to say hi to me and asked me to sing stuff and sign a-and –"

"I don't need an explanation, I get it," grinned Shinso. "People were bound to freak out, seeing you in your hero costume for the first time."

"I-I suppose so…" Midoriya put Siren on the arm of the chair and shuffled about a bit, hugging on one of the many pillows as he spoke. "Anyway, that took *forever* – not nearly as exciting as what you did. Um… and then Aozora whisked me around the place so she could update the radio station's website, I think, with some more information about me on it, a-and take pictures and stuff – which was also pretty scary. Afterwards, there was – you know Minim? One of Present Mic's sidekicks? She does a radio segment around the middle of the day – a-and, she was interviewing Mt Lady? You know her? Anyway, I think they started talking about me – and then Aozora just ended up pushing me in there a-and… that was also kind of scary. And *then –"*

Shinso put his hand up to stop him, not unlike what Static had done earlier that day, "Let me guess, whatever happened next, it was scary?"

Midoriya blinked at him for a moment before sinking back into his seat with a groan, "Yeah…"

Shinso laughed manically at him, turning over slightly to see that scowling, angry bird look of his as Siren sang in a way that sounded suspiciously like laughter alongside him.

They were then rather suddenly interrupted by Aozora, who had just briskly walked out of the elevator and into the room – a pen behind

her ear – a pile of papers in her arms – her hair a mess, as per usual, with her headphones dangling around her neck much like Midoriya's. She stopped and narrowed her eyes at them. "I hear laughter."

Shinso tried to stop laughing, but Aozora's proclamation was so damn stupid that it just made him laugh harder.

"Whatever happened," she continued, "if you didn't get it on camera – I'm disowning both of you."

Midoriya started wailing about being disowned despite the fact that it made *zero sense* and Shinso just sat there laughing; vaguely wondering why he found it so funny and when the last time was he had found himself laughing that hard.

"I see Raven doesn't care about being disowned," Aozora huffed as she threw the stack of paperwork at the desk. She didn't seem so bothered that half of it ended up on the floor.

"I-I could not care less," Shinso replied, finally pulling himself together.

"First of all, *rude,"* she retorted pointedly. "Secondly, do you want to go on the radio in like… five minutes – or not?!"

"Wait, you were being serious?" Shinso frowned. It was rather hard to tell what was a joke and what was not around here.

"Yeah!" she exclaimed, waving her arms about and sending even more pieces of paper flying across the room. Siren was playing a game of swooping around them until she got smothered by one and Midoriya was forced to dive forwards and catch her.

"Why not?" Aozora continued. "And I want Owl in here at some point –" she informed Midoriya. "Her social media impression is *brilliant."*

"Wait, Jiro?" Shinso interjected.

"Is that her name?" grinned Aozora. Seriously – Shinso needed to remember to ask for tips, what is *with* that smile?!

"I actually saw her earlier today," he recalled.

Midoriya blinked at him, "Y-You did?"

"Yeah, she was at the villain attack I mentioned – we talked for a bit afterwards – mainly about how terrified that kid is going to be of the

dentists for the rest of his life."

"Ah – she's a hero student, right?" Aozora confirmed, "Damnit – that means she's on an internship… Not this week then! Maybe another time… ANYWAY –"

Shinso flinched – Midoriya didn't.

"– you coming in or what?!"

Shinso hesitated. If he went on the radio as Raven, he could say goodbye any and all anonymity that remained. But then… he thought back to his, well, he supposed he could call it his *debut* – and then to the wise words Static had told him…

Besides, no one knew who Raven actually was – and Shinso didn't necessarily have to use that as his hero name. That was the wonder of the radio; no one would even see his iconic hair.

He smiled, "I guess I am."

Present Mic's Radio Show!

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:30 to 19:30

Canary's Hour

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH!

CANARY: Yay!

PRESENT MIC: It's SIX THIRTY! And we all know what that means…

CANARY: U-Um, hi?

PRESENT MIC: CANARY'S BACK!

CANARY: I-I'm back again!

PRESENT MIC: And *this time* – we have a *second* hero in training in the room with us!

GUEST: You mean other than Siren.

Present Mic splutters

PRESENT MIC: *Siren* is not a hero in training!

GUEST: She competed in the Sports Festival.

PRESENT MIC: SHE DID NOT!

Siren tweets aggressively in the background

GUEST: We definitely would have lost if it weren't for Siren.

CANARY: H-He's right.

PRESENT MIC: ANYWAYS – what I *mean* is – Canary's friend is not behind the soundproof glass this time!

CANARY: D-Does this mean I can do less talking?

PRESENT MIC & GUEST: No.

CANARY: Worth a shot…

PRESENT MIC: EVERYONE SAY HI TO *RAVEN!*

RAVEN: Ravens are the best birds – apart from Siren.

Siren chirps approvingly

CANARY: Better than cockatoos?

RAVEN: Better than cockatoos.

PRESENT MIC: Well – I feel *betrayed!*

RAVEN: Cockatoos are loud, difficult and have awful hair styles.

Canary tries to stifle his laughter, but fails

RAVEN: I think your co-producer is dying – she just fell off her chair.

PRESENT MIC: *I'm* the one who's dying here! I feel *attacked!*

CANARY: H-He never said *you* were a cockatoo – d-did you just confirm that you are secretly a bird?

RAVEN: Someone call Puffin.

CANARY: P-Puffin needs to stop giving us questionable conspiracy theories.

RAVEN: Nah, Dove just needs to stop encouraging him.

CANARY: Y-You don't help!

RAVEN: That's because he has yet to come up with anything on me yet.

CANARY: You should be worried…

RAVEN: I *am*.

PRESENT MIC: Can… I ask what these conspiracy theories are?

RAVEN: There's a lot on you and Canary being –

CANARY: L-LET'S NOT!

RAVEN: Ow – no need to shout.

PRESENT MIC: *YEAH LET'S NOT DO THAT!*

RAVEN: I am going to lose my hearing.

PRESENT MIC: How about *instead* – we go on to our first traditional segment – *CANARY!*

CANARY: W-what?

PRESENT MIC: TELL US A RANDOM FACT!

CANARY: E-Err…

RAVEN: I thought you prepared these before the show?

CANARY: I-I keep forgetting!

RAVEN: Then tell us a fact about forgetfulness.

PRESENT MIC: That's not going to –

CANARY: Ok! Did you know –

PRESENT MIC: – huh, never mind –

CANARY: – that you are more likely to forget something if you walk through a doorway, or even *think* about walking through a doorway.

PRESENT MIC: So… when I walk into another room, and then completely forget why I'm going there, I'm *not* going crazy?!

CANARY: No –

RAVEN: – Debateable –

CANARY: – it's a real phycological study!

RAVEN: That you know all about because…

CANARY: I-I found it interesting!

RAVEN: Why am I at all surprised?

CANARY: M-Maybe you shouldn't be, at this point…

RAVEN: Everyone should feel sorry for me and the amount of *nonsense* I have to translate through sign language.

CANARY: W-Well you're the one who makes the silly sign names!

RAVEN: Cockatoo was my stroke of genius, by the way.

PRESENT MIC: I am *not* surprised – because the conversations you two have when you forget there's someone else in the room who can speak – or sign – your supposedly secret language, i.e. *me* – would *definitely* catch more than a few strange looks if they were uttered out loud!

RAVEN: Well, when Canary decides that words work, we *do* get some strange looks.

CANARY: I-I'm sorry!

RAVEN: You need to stop apologising for every little thing. Anyway, half the time, they aren't even your fault.

Canary whimpers something indistinguishable

PRESENT MIC: *Raven – can you translate?*

RAVEN: I speak two out of the five languages Canary knows. Mutter mode is not one of them.

Siren tweets loudly in the microphone

RAVEN: Actually, make that six languages – because Canary one hundred percent can speak Siren's language and that is a frightening thought.

PRESENT MIC: Can *you* speak Siren?

RAVEN: Err… I'm *improving*.

Siren continues to chirp, periodically tapping on Canary's microphone

PRESENT MIC: Well, *my* skills in Siren-ese say that she's telling us all that it is time for a song!

RAVEN: I'm pretty sure she just wants to eat the microphone –

PRESENT MIC: CUE THE MUSIC!

…Time skip through most of the show…

Siren sings happily in the background

RAVEN: He's not back yet – why isn't he back?

CANARY: Ahhhhh–

RAVEN: Has this ever happened before?

CANARY: *No!*

RAVEN: Well great – can we just lock the door?

CANARY: N-No! Don't do t-that! I don't know how any of the buttons work!

A door slams open and shut again

RAVEN: Well, look who decided to show up.

PRESENT MIC: I'M HHHEEERRREEE!

RAVEN: A perilous toilet break?

PRESENT MIC: AND WE'RE GONNA PRETEND THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN!

CANARY: P-Probably for the best…

RAVEN: I won't.

PRESENT MIC: MOVING ON – why don't we have a little go at the CANARY QUESTIONNAIRE?!

CANARY: Plus Raven.

RAVEN: Minus Raven.

PRESENT MIC: OUR FIRST QUESTION IS FROM *Violet Winter* – and they ask – what are your top three, favourite songs. And they've asked for *three* because it must be hard to choose! And you would be *right!*

CANARY: I-I have to choose *three?*

RAVEN: Oh no, whatever shall we do?

CANARY: I don't think I can narrow it down to only three…

RAVEN: Wouldn't want to hurt the other songs' feelings.

CANARY: But err… I really like Wings! That's what I used first in the Sports Festival. I like flying – it's really fun.

Siren chirps

PRESENT MIC: It seems like Siren agrees!

RAVEN: Thank you for the translation.

CANARY: And then… I also really like Walking on Sunshine? T-That's one of the first songs I ever used my Quirk on – with – I-I don't know… Anyway – I like it; it's fun.

RAVEN: We don't talk about the *first* song you used.

PRESENT MIC: *What was the first song?*

CANARY: Now everyone's going to ask!

RAVEN: Have fun with that.

Canary groans audibly

PRESENT MIC: Then what's your third favourite song?!

RAVEN: Is it –

CANARY: NO! I'm never singing that *again!*

Raven laughs quietly

RAVEN: It must have been quite a sight though.

CANARY: Stop making everyone so curious!

PRESENT MIC: *Third favourite song!*

CANARY: Ah! U-Um… err – Fight Song!

PRESENT MIC: Aaand what about Raven's favourite songs?!

RAVEN: I don't sing.

PRESENT MIC: You can still like music!

RAVEN: I just listen to whatever Canary listens to.

PRESENT MIC: Well that's *boring*.

RAVEN: I don't do singing or dancing or anything of the sort.

CANARY: Y-You're looking at me like you're warning me not to try anything…?

RAVEN: Good – I'm glad the message has been made clear.

CANARY: W-Well, it's ok – I don't go to dance anymore anyway.

PRESENT MIC: WHAT?!

CANARY: I-I – s-sorry?

PRESENT MIC: Why'd you quit?!

CANARY: H-Ha, all the people from dance are probably listening… w-well, first of all, the teacher went on maternity leave, a-and I didn't really feel comfortable with anyone else… And then, um – sometimes, the others would talk about Canary and stuff, without realising that it was *me*. Then after the Sports Festival, it felt really awkward and everyone kept asking me questions and stuff… and then I almost accidently used my Quirk in the building, so that wasn't great…

RAVEN: Define *almost*.

CANARY: I-It was fine! It was *fine*.

RAVEN: That is not encouraging *at all*.

CANARY: …It was just a little rain.

RAVEN: …*inside?*

CANARY: …maybe – didn't I already tell you this?

RAVEN: Not about the rain – you conveniently skipped that part.

CANARY: Sorry…

RAVEN: It's ok – now you've just told me live on the radio, no problem there *whatsoever*.

PRESENT MIC: *Ah.*

CANARY: W-What?

PRESENT MIC: I see where the sarcasm and dry wit comes from now.

RAVEN: I am an incredible influence.

CANARY: W-Wait, what?

PRESENT MIC: I think it's safe to say that we are both slowly corrupting Canary!

RAVEN: Me more than you.

CANARY: W-Why am I being corrupted?

RAVEN: I don't know – but Dove's going to kill me for it.

Siren twitters menacingly into the microphone

RAVEN: Or… Siren is?

CANARY: I think that was a threat to D-Dove, and not you.

PRESENT MIC: Can we have lessons on Siren-ese?

CANARY: I *told* you – I just guess!

RAVEN: And I don't believe you.

PRESENT MIC: You know what *I* don't believe?!

CANARY & RAVEN: What?

RAVEN: Jinx.

CANARY: Does that mean I can stop talking?

RAVEN: You are hereby unjinxed

PRESENT MIC: IT'S SEVEN THIRTY!

CANARY: Oh, wait, it is?

RAVEN: And… that means what, exactly?

PRESENT MIC: IT'S THE END OF THE SHOW!

CANARY: Shouldn't you know that?

RAVEN: I don't know, I'm half asleep – time is irrelevant.

CANARY: Tomorrow we're gonna be with your favourite teacher~

RAVEN: *Shut it.*

PRESENT MIC: Am I *not* your favourite teacher?!

RAVEN: No.

PRESENT MIC: I am *hurt.*

RAVEN: Great – Look, even Siren's asleep, and I was under the impression that was impossible.

PRESENT MIC: Then let us end our *wonderful* segment here before –

CANARY: Is he being sarcastic?

RAVEN: I don't think that's possible.

PRESENT MIC: BEFORE ANYMORE OF THIS CONTINUES

RAVEN: I *probably* won't be back.

CANARY: Raven will be back soon!

RAVEN: If I am – I've been blackm–

Raven's muffled murmurs continue

PRESENT MIC: Well, there seems to be a *story behind that.* Canary – why don't you let Raven *breathe?*

CANARY: Oh.

Overdramatic gasping for air

PRESENT MIC: We shall be seeing Canary again next *Thursday* at the same time as always! *Now you've gotta say…*

CANARY: U-Until next time!

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH –

Aizawa turned off the radio.

He sighed, closing his file of paperwork. He still had a few forms to fill out after the last few villain arrests he'd had a role in – but they would have to wait.

It was the end of the day, as emphasised by the end of the radio show. He'd tuned in on pure curiosity. Usually, he avoided it. He had to listen to Yamada's impulsively loud voice for most of the day anyway. But, from the general buzz about this particular radio segment, he knew that this *Midoriya* would be on air, and possibly Shinso too.

Now, Shinso sparked his curiosity. He reminded Aizawa way too much of himself at that age. Tired of the repression; of the endless scramble for the spotlight. He just wanted to prove himself; to make a positive difference, rather than being kicked to the curve. But he was a hero at heart. Perhaps that was why he and Midoriya had gotten so close. He'd seen someone like him and decided to be the one to help him up; not thinking twice, or even considering what a *real hero* would do in that situation. He just did it anyway.

Through teaching him to use Aizawa's capture weapon, he was certainly making an investment in the kid. But he believed he could make the cut. Midoriya was smart enough to twist Nedzu's will; get them on their way to the hero course. But Shinso was proving that he could carry his own weight. He had a long way to go, but, then again – most of the hero course students did. The fact that neither of the general studies kids cared that they'd have to work a little harder, further proved that they deserved this shot.

Speaking of ambition…

Aizawa wondered how the *current* members of class 1-A were faring. There were those like Bakugo, who had aimed for the highest light possible. Ones which settled for whatever they could – others who were daring enough to step out of their comfort zone and try something new – and those who chose options that they believed best suited their abilities.

And then there was Iida.

He'd submitted one choice – a hero agency that didn't fit any of the parameters in Aizawa's mind. He had done well in the Sports Festival; had plenty of interesting options and paths to take. But, instead, when he thrust his form into Aizawa's arms along with the others from the class, a cold determination set in his eyes, he went straight to Hosu.

Perhaps Aizawa should have taken him aside. But… he felt that it was a little too early, to talk about his brother, so, he decided that it was best to leave him to come to terms with it in his own way. He was the class representative after all. Aizawa may have slept through that little decision, but Iida had more than proved that he was worthy of the title. He was hard working, rule abiding and, overall, one of the best students in his class. Surely, he wouldn't do anything reckless…

But still… to take up an internship in the same place as where his brother had been attacked by the hero killer, Stain…? Something wasn't right here.

Aizawa glanced back at the clock. He had Shinso and Midoriya tomorrow. He hadn't figured out what he would be doing with them yet.

Hm, they had Yamada today, and would have him again on Thursday. He would do well in showing them the ropes of media presence and basic hero logistics. Nemuri, on Friday, would most likely do a similar thing. She would probably be taking advantage of Midoriya's growing fame and his versatile Quirk. But Shinso…

Aizawa had to make sure that whatever he organised to do with the two of them, was beneficial to Shinso, considering the other teachers would most likely focus on Midoriya. He needed a lot of help anyway – with such inexperience with his Quirk.

He *could* just take them back to school. Teach them some basic martial arts or parkour skills. Like Aizawa, both of them would have to rely heavily on their abilities beyond their Quirks, since Midoriya couldn't use his all the time and Shinso most certainly couldn't either…

Then again…

Looking at Midoriya's skills in the Sports Festival, it was safe to say he was rather athletic. From the information the radio show gave him – his pursuits in dance had certainly delivered in terms of flexibility. He could doge well; was fast and clearly knew how to evade attacks long enough to build up the power of his Quirk. Yeah, he could definitely keep up.

What if he… what if he took them out on a *proper* internship-experience? If he fell back on the original plan; spent the morning at school, seeing what they could do, and then took them out into the city in the evening. They could assist in some real hero work – or at least, see Aizawa doing it. From the various messages Yamada had

sent him throughout the day, it had become apparent that Shinso had *already* been rather useful in that context, and Nedzu knew how to twist the paperwork to let the general studies students act as though they were hero students.

Oh.

But what if he didn't take them to Musutafu – and instead branched out a little further?

He could use the guise of taking the two of them out of their comfort zone, and to somewhere people aren't expecting to see Canary. Whilst, in the process, having a valid excuse to check up on Iida.

Maybe they could have that one on one *talk* that Aizawa had been putting off. He could also speak with whoever Iida's supervisor in his internship was – who was that again? Oh, yeah – Manual. Aizawa had met him at some point before, he was pretty sure – back when that Trigger drug was a big issue. That reminded him of the vigilantes he'd worked alongside during the time. He'd had enough experience with the sort to know how things would go if Iida decided to take matters into his own hands. Revenge, no matter the motivation, was not an option for a hero.

Yes… that would be the best thing to do – for all parties involved. Besides, Aizawa had seen Iida talking with Midoriya and Shinso many times before. He was pretty sure that he was part of the group with the silly bird names. Definitely not Dove… or Owl – since both of them were girls. Probably Uraraka and Jiro. Then Shinso was Raven, that was for sure. And… that left Crane and Puffin. Iida had to be one of those two.

Ugh, why was he thinking about this? He should stop listening to the radio – Yamada knew all too well how to get you transfixed on something and Aizawa was *not* about to stoop as low as trying to figure out the secret identities of… ok, he really needed to stop now.

He turned to his computer to buy the train tickets to Hosu before he changed his mind. UA would refund him.

His computer mouse hovered over the purchase button. He had a… *feeling*, about all this. He couldn't tell if it was good or bad yet.

But then he bought them and, moments later, felt a familiar mass brush itself against his legs.

Ah, perhaps that strange feeling had just been his cat, staring at him from across the room, as if he could telepathically demand food.

At least, he hoped it was.

Chapter End Notes

…*grins slyly.*

Thank you to **Erin_Dragneel**, who's radio question was what was spat out of my random number generator list thingy this time around. I'm running low on questions, by the way – so, feel free to throw them at me! Although, to be honest – I'm not one hundred percent sure when the next radio bit is going to *be* so…

None of that was *at all* ominous.

ANYWAY! Tomorrow is my first official day at University! I have no idea if this is going to affect my upload schedule yet, so, we shall just have to wait and see. I *am* writing this very sentence only the day before my upload day so… that's not too great – but that *has* happened before.

Throws art at the (un)suspecting readers

We have a cute little team of Sirens by **Pigeonat**!

And *guess who it is* – it's **lovypop17**! And her cute Canary has super pretty wings this time :D

woshuto did some sweet little sketches of Canary doing sign language!

Attaco has given us Present Mic listening to Canary's singing

Sadistic Cat doodled Canary with Siren on his shoulder

This one is by **SoftLittleBlanket** – it's a picture depicting the teams we have on Discord! I know that makes no sense to most of you. It makes little sense to the people on Discord too – but the picture's *awesome* so go look at it anyways!

I have been… putting people's names in bold if it's their archive or tumblr name? And usually it's just left normal if it's from Discord – but I might be getting this wrong I don't know no one knows this is just madness to be honest.

I hate Tumblr – it's so freaking hard to navigate. ANYWAY, I logged on for reasons I'll explain in a *moment* only to find MORE FANART! This is by **denkikaminariii** and it's of when Canary was singing Bad Day! Links are so difficult sometimes I *swear* –

Anyway – I got bored, and thought I'd doodle what Canary's and Shinso's hero costumes look like in this story! I've had some art of Canary's before, linked somewhere back along – but here's another XD Again, Tumblr's weird. I posted it there anyways though – and here's my Tumblr that I'm hardly ever on… yay…

Together in Hosu

Chapter Notes

My plan says chapter twenty-five is supposed to be the end of the summer camp.

Looks back at where we are in the story

YEAH, THIS IS GOING *SWELL*.

On another note, I know that, whenever I've used songs before, I tend to put the link in the chapter and you listen along to it whilst you read. But, here, some of the songs used are only used for a couple of seconds (for no reason whatsoever there isn't a fight scene in here at all what are you talking about?) – so I haven't put the link in for all of them. They will be put in the endnotes though, and the YouTube playlist linked in the end-endnotes (If I remember) :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Todoroki wasn't too sure why he was here.

That sentence could be interpreted in many different ways:

Sometimes, he wondered what God decided to *bless* Father with his existence – and *why?* Was the only reason that he was here at all to

become a hero that fulfilled Father's hungry ambition?

He pondered why he was here, looking down at his phone talking with… friends. How did he get to this point? Why did he… not try before? He'd always seen friendship as an unnecessary preoccupation – an obstacle to his future that he'd rather not concern himself with. Now, he doesn't know how he got by without it.

He also, sometimes, questioned why he'd taken up Father's offer to internship under him, rather than break free of his hold all together; rebel by becoming a hero despite of his name, rather than because of it. But… that wasn't why he was here at all. He wouldn't have gone if he hadn't visited his mother for the first time since… But, that was all because of Canary.

He didn't know if Canary really knew how much that song meant to him. But there was something in the way he sang it – it almost seemed like he wasn't just trying to activate his Quirk – but trying to truly convey the meaning to *Todoroki* – like he was trying to help him. He didn't know the truth – but he saw what little emotion displayed on Todoroki's face, and took action. Todoroki looked forward to seeing him on the hero course. He deserved his place there. Todoroki really would never have visited his mother; gone to his father's agency – if it weren't for him.

But, mainly, he wondered why he was here. Like, right *here*, in this moment.

Hosu was bleak. A strange city – out of the way of the hustle and bustle that Todoroki had come to be accustomed to. Yet, there was a certain darkness around the place. Every alleyway caught his eye. The strangers that lurked there glared back at him. It was as though the shadows had eyes.

Todoroki walked a good distance behind his father and his sidekicks as they trooped through the streets. It didn't feel like a hero's patrol. They were supposed to make others feel safe and protected. But this felt more like a small army, marching their way to war. Father's menacing manner did not, in Todoroki's opinion, give hope to the citizens of Japan, but instead, sparked a fear in everyone around him. They would shrink away in shame of any and all crimes that they may or may not have committed – all the way from theft in the local convenience store, to that toy they stole from their friend back in nursery.

He supposed it was effective.

Endeavor may have been a pretty poor father, but he *was* the number two hero. There were things Todoroki could learn from him. Although, he might not follow in his footsteps in terms of how he went about these patrols…

Maybe Canary would do it a little better. Once he'd gotten used to the people gawking at him and taking pictures, that is. People stared at Todoroki too. But it wasn't the same. He hoped that, one day, it would be. He didn't want people to fear him like they feared his father. There was only so much Father could teach him. His friends – well, they taught the rest.

Aria in the Aviary!

Owl: *I feel so sorry for that one kid from yesterday*

Owl: *He will have a really bad fear of the dentist after this.*

Owl: *But yeah, today was pretty quiet.*

Dove: *Mine was the same as always. Super helpful though!*

Owl: *I guess jogging around the city a million times will be helpful in the long run.*

Owl: *…That was an unintentional pun.*

Canary: *We haven't stopped all day.*

Canary: *Well, we did on the train*

Canary: *Your teacher is kind of scary though*

Canary: *But Shinso's a fan*

Raven: *How are you running and typing at the same time?!*

Canary: *You're doing it too!*

Owl: *By the fact that he's not replying, I'm assuming it's pretty difficult.*

Raven: *yes*

Dove: *Where you running to?*

Canary: *Wherever Mr Aizawa runs to*

Owl: *Fair enough.*

Dove: *WHERE are you running then?*

Canary: *Hosu*

Dove: *Wait, you're in Hosu?!*

Owl: *Isn't that where Iida is?*

Puffin: *It's where I am.*

Dove: *AW*

Dove: *We're missing out on the party!*

Puffin: *It is not a party.*

Dove: *Oh, you know what I mean!*

Dove: *We could have all met up or something!*

Owl: *Speaking of Iida*

Owl: *We haven't heard from him in a while*

Dove: *Oh yeah, I hope he's ok!*

Dove: *It's really unlike him to stay so quiet*

Dove: *I'm kind of worried about him…*

Puffin: *I haven't been here long, so I haven't been able to meet him.*

Dove: *What about you guys?*

Dove: *Canary?*

Dove: *Shinso?*

Owl: *They're probably pretty busy*

Owl: *I'm surprised Canary was able to text at all*

Owl: *Shinso seemed to be struggling with it*

"Hey, look, over there!"

Todoroki looked up. One of Father's sidekicks was pointing at a column of smoke, climbing up into the night sky. Now he was actually focusing on the real world around him, he could hear the distant sound of panicked screams.

They started to run. Todoroki shoved his phone into his pocket as he hurried to catch up. As they drew closer, an alarm started to blare. Whatever it was, it sounded serious.

"Shouto!" Endeavor cried. "There's trouble ahead –" he said like it wasn't obvious– "I'll show you what it means to be a hero!"

But then…

He felt his phone vibrate in his pocket. That was unfamiliar – a type of ringtone (if that was the correct terminology) that he wasn't used to.

He slowed as he pulled out the device once more.

Canary: *[Location Sent]*

"Damnit! You should be watching me!" Father exclaimed. He'd been rather irked by Todoroki constantly checking his phone the entire time, but this seemed to push him over the edge.

It did the same for Todoroki.

His breath hitched as he turned on his heel and ran.

"Hey, wait! Where the hell are you going?!"

“An alleyway in four-two-ten echo street,” he called over his shoulder, trying to keep the emotion out of his voice. “If you finish what you’re doing or see extra pros, send them there!”

He didn’t look back again, and Father didn’t run after him.

“I’m leaving you here to take care of this trouble,” he added after a second thought, not slowing down, and through gritted teeth, he said, “I’m sure you can take care of it yourself.”

His friend might be in danger.

This was it – Shinso was going to die.

There were so many things he hadn’t done.

He hadn’t gotten onto the hero course – proved he was more than a villain – made a difference in the world – he hadn’t even brainwashed Bakugo into punching himself in the face!

“Keep up the pace, Shinso,” Eraser Head called back. He started to scale another building.

Then there was freaking *Midoriya*, who just started clambering up in the weirdest way possible, whilst glancing down at his phone at the same time.

How the actual hell –

Dance should not have translated so easily to parkour. There had to be some kind of limit to how many things Midoriya could apply those skills to.

Mr Aizawa – no, *Eraser Head* (they were told to call him that when out on patrol), had spent the entire morning, well, entire *day,* refining their skills in the subject. Cementos had constructed a labyrinth of structures for them to navigate through as quickly as possible – changing it whenever they reached the end of the course. Midoriya was a little clumsier at first, nothing compared to Shinso though. But Eraser Head had taught them how to fall properly; how to jump further; how to find the unlikeliest of footholds and how to help each other out of tricky situations. He was a good teacher; Shinso couldn’t

wait until he was their teacher for *real*. Although, he *did* keep reminding them that there was a possibility that he wouldn't be; that they hadn't really proved their worth yet. That was why Shinso was so determined to keep up. Didn't make it any easier though.

This was so hard – he was going to die of exhaustion and the other two would just leave him behind, face down in an alleyway somewhere.

Maybe he was just being dramatic.

Maybe watching Midoriya text and parkour at the same time was making him *want* to die.

He had spent the last five minutes desperately trying to type that one sentence to send to the group chat in response to Midoriya's endless stream. He was quite sure Aizawa had seen Midoriya on his phone. He was also confident that the only reason he hadn't told him off for it was because he was pretty damn impressed that he hadn't tripped himself up yet whilst doing it – and was just waiting for that moment so it would teach Midoriya a lesson.

He still hadn't though.

Shinso finally sent his message – Midoriya grinned back at him, hanging off a fire escape ladder a little further ahead than Shinso, and sent his response as him and Eraser Head waited for Shinso to catch up again.

Mr Aizawa was holding back for *sure*. He was barely using his scarf, ensuring that the two of them could see a way up that didn't require it. He definitely could have gone faster and further, but he didn't seem to mind.

Shinso didn't have Eraser Head's spare scarf with him this time. He'd had another go at it that afternoon, but he still wasn't nearly adept at it enough to put it into action. He'd probably just tangle himself up and look like an idiot in front of everyone.

They had been on the rooftops for a while – after they left the train station, that was. They must have circled around a little, because Shinso could see the tracks up ahead – where the bullet train would shoot past. In fact, he could see in the distance; one of the trains arriving was now.

He should have been focusing less on the train and his phone, and

probably a little more on what he was doing (yes, he knew he was being a little hypocritical).

It was when Siren let out a shrill shriek from Midoriya's side, that Shinso looked up, about a second too late.

There was another cry – not from Siren – not from any Human that Shinso had ever heard – and he looked to his right, eyes widening, when a great, hulking beast pounced.

"SHINSO!" Midoriya screamed.

Grey-blue skin and four blank eyes that zeroed in on Shinso's stunned self.

It roared – a high-pitched, warbled thing – as it raised its hand to bring it crashing down on Shinso's skull.

Aizawa was quick to react.

He used his scarf to pull the monster away, just enough to let Shinso scramble out from underneath it – out from its deadly grasp.

"What the heck is that thing?!" Shinso exclaimed.

The eyes of the beast turned in a way that almost made him gag, rolling in an exposed brain as it focused this time on Aizawa.

It pulled the scarf away from itself in apparent ease and began to crawl its way towards him.

He let his eyes glowed red – but the erasing of its Quirk didn't seem to bother the beast.

Shinso clapped his hands frantically, trying to catch the monster's attention again. "Hey, hey, hey! What the hell do you think you're doing?!" he tried, desperate for a response to activate his Quirk with.

But it didn't seem to care – and that's when Aizawa realised.

Nomu.

Flashes of the USJ attack were brought to the forefront of his mind – how he was able to do *nothing* to the beast that even *All Might* struggled to defeat.

As it lashed out, Aizawa stepped back to evade. What else could he do? He didn't know what Quirk – *Quirks* – it had, or how his erasure affected them. If he left it – it could go after other civilians. Shinso's Quirk wasn't subduing it either. That only left –

"Canary – I need you to use your Quirk!" he ordered, "Kill it!"

"W-What?!" the kid stammered. He had just pulled Shinso to his feet, standing well back from Aizawa's fight.

"Do as I say! This isn't Human – the same as – USJ – it's a Nomu!" he tried desperately to explain, avoiding blow after blow. How long until the Nomu tried a new tactic? Released one of its hidden abilities? The one at the USJ had many – what dangers could *this* one pose?

"Do it, Midoriya!" Shinso insisted. Aizawa was vaguely aware of him grabbing Midoriya's left arm – flicking through the songs on the playlist he called his *arsenal*.

Whatever was chosen was not played out loud. Aizawa was focusing so desperately on staying alive and making sure the beast didn't instead aim for his students, that he didn't even acknowledge that Midoriya had started singing, until the boy lunged forwards himself, right past Aizawa, and into the arms of the Nomu.

"Kid!" Aizawa exclaimed, but then –

"*Another one bites the dust!"*

– it was gone.

Midoriya fell to the ground, coughing on the clouds of dust around him – dust that was once the Nomu.

It was gone in seconds.

Midoriya pulled the headphones away from his ears again, tapping on the device tied to his arm frantically in an attempt to stop the music that didn't reach Aizawa's ears.

Hell. This kid was *powerful – dangerously* powerful.

"Are you alright, Midoriya?" Shinso called, rushing forwards and

kicking up the settling dust again.

“No!” Midoriya exclaimed, pushing himself away from Shinso. “D-Don’t t-t-touch –”

“Hey, it’s ok,” Shinso insisted, raising his hands in mock surrender and stepping back a little. “You haven’t used that song before – the power isn’t going too last long after you’ve finished singing.”

“Good job, Midoriya,” Aizawa said quickly, moving past his shock as Midoriya clambered to his feet, brushing the thick layer of dust from his trousers. “Sorry to make you do that,” he was sure to add. The new hero student looked rather traumatised.

“I-I-I don’t understand,” he responded in barely a whisper. “What *was* that t-thing?”

“A Nomu,” Aizawa grimaced, “some kind of monster – they have multiple Quirks.”

“You said one attacked you at the USJ,” Shinso recalled. “So, they’re with the League of Villains?”

“Correct.” Aizawa buried his face in his scarf to avoid breathing in any more of the dust filled air. He didn’t like the idea of having Nomu-dust in his lungs.

“So… they’re h-here?” Midoriya realised, fidgeting with his hands, his eyes wide with fear.

Aizawa gritted his teeth, glancing around the skyline of the city. Where could it have come from?

Then he noticed an explosion – not far away, sending sparks and smoke billowing into the night.

“Follow me!” he instructed and took off once more. His students didn’t hesitate to follow him. They were getting quicker on their feet.

If everyone got out of this in one piece – it might *actually* be beneficial to them…

They reached a roof top overlooking the scene – and what a scene it was.

“Midoriya…” Aizawa breathed. It came out a lot quieter than he had expected. He turned to him and cleared his throat. “I want you to

build up a sleeping song. Can you do that? Has the cooldown ended from using it this morning?" he questioned, thinking back to the time when they were testing Aizawa's erasure against Midoriya's Quirk.

"N-No, Sir," he replied. "But I have a second one."

"Excellent, start – now."

He was hesitant – his voice quiet and unsure. But, he followed Aizawa's orders. That was more than what some of his other students could achieve, it seems.

~Sing Me To Sleep – Alan Walker~

"*Wait a second let me catch my breath –"*

Aizawa almost stopped and waited – not processing that it was part of the song. The USJ incident had really done a number on him, it seemed. He was so preoccupied on how his students were faring, that his brain simply wasn't as capable of processing the situation at hand.

"*Your lips are moving; I can't hear a thing –"*

And somehow, Aizawa barely could. He didn't think it was part of Canary's Quirk though.

As they charged down the emergency fire escape stairs and onto the battlefield, the screams fell short of his ears as he gazed up at the winged Nomu, and at the giant, bulky one the heroes were focusing their efforts on, in the middle of the ring of destruction.

"Hey, you a hero?!" called out a blonde-haired woman, wearing a green and white costume. "We need all hands-on deck!"

"Canary!" Aizawa yelled back.

He nodded surely, "*Anything for you–"*

"Raven – try and brainwash them again!" insisted Aizawa.

"Yes, Sir!"

"*– Melodies, stuck inside your head –*"

"Wait, aren't you –" the woman started, recognition shining in her eyes as she shielded her face from the flames nearby.

"*– A song in every breath.*"

Canary charged forwards, ensuring he was as close as possible to the Nomu (was there even a plural for that word? There shouldn't have been – there should never have been more than *one*) for his power to work. He kept his distance as he chanted the lyrics repeatedly at the beasts.

"*Sing me to sleep!*"

But the Nomu continued to roar – swatting at the other heroes like they were flies as they attacked at random.

"*– to sleep, now – sing me to sleep…*"

Before the music could continue, Midoriya deactivated his speakers and microphone. "I-It won't work, Sir!" he yelled back.

They had spent hours ensuring that Midoriya could affect only the people (or, non-people, in this case) that he wanted to with his Quirk. It was early days, but he should have been able to knock the Nomu out, so why –

"I-I don't think they *can* sleep!" Midoriya cried, leaping back and away from the Nomu's grasp.

What the *hell?*

Shinso didn't seem to be having any luck either – even when the Nomu cried out, his Quirk simply wouldn't activate.

"This isn't working!" Shinso told him, falling back to his side.

"Manual, stop the fire!" another hero cried – diverting Aizawa's attention.

Manual?

Aizawa turned his head to see the hero directing water, streaming from a broken fire-hydrant, at the roaring flames.

"Why'd you run off by yourself?!" Manual cried bitterly, "Where the

hell are you, Tenya?!"

What?

Shinso and Midoriya must have heard that too, because both of their eyes widened in explicit fear for their friend.

'Damnit!' Aizawa thought and Manual exclaimed at the same time. *'Now what?'*

And then, if things couldn't get any worse – that stupid flying Nomu dropped the hero it was holding, his head slamming painfully into the concrete below, and it swooped and dived at the next closest person –

Midoriya.

The kid yelled out in fright as his little bird started squawking frantically, swooping around the Nomu's head as it climbed higher into the sky.

"Midoriya!" Shinso called out to his friend as he desperately tried to pry the creature's claws open and release his shoulders.

Aizawa activated his Quirk to attempt stopping the beast. His wings stopped moving, yes, but now he was just gliding away, with his student in tow.

"USE YOUR QUIRK, CANARY!" Aizawa yelled after him.

The other Nomu had focused its rampage on Aizawa again now. He had no choice other than to protect Shinso, whose Quirk simply wasn't affective in this scenario.

"PROTECT YOURSELF AND PROTECT OTHERS!" he finished – and Midoriya disappeared into the distance.

Shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot!

The Nomu's claws were clamped tightly around him – digging into the thick fabric of his jacket.

As soon as they were out of sight of Mr Aizawa, the Nomu started to

flap its wings again, allowing them to turn tight corners around the buildings, taking him away from the fight.

Where the hell was it going?!

Did it want to kill him? Did it want to take him to someone?

Midoriya didn't understand, but he didn't particularly want to find out.

He had to sing something – something to… to kill the thing. Although, he didn't really want to do that again.

Siren was screaming, whizzing around the Nomu angrily, yet it didn't seem to be bothered by her.

But then, all of a sudden, there was an ear-piercing screech.

The Nomu halted in the air abruptly, releasing Midoriya and tossing him into the sky as it reached up at its exposed brain and disgusting eyes.

Midoriya's instincts took over. At least there was *one* song he was always happy to resort to.

~Wings – Hurts~

"*WRAP YOUR WINGS–*"

The great green wings burst from his back immediately, catching Midoriya in the air. He used his momentum to glide as far away from the Nomu as possible, as the beast shrieked, spiralling out of the sky and crashing into the road below.

Midoriya was heading in the opposite direction to where Mr Aizawa and Shinso had been, singing one of his favourite sings softly under his breath as he flew.

Iida…

Manual – the hero he was interning under – he'd lost him. Where could he be? Especially in such a dramatic time – Midoriya would

expect him to be where the action was, lending a hand. And the attackers – they were Nomu too! The very *type* of beast which attacked class 1-A at the USJ. Surely, Iida would want to help fight? Uraraka had said Iida had run to call for aid during the USJ attack and was disappointed with himself for not helping more. Why wouldn't he want to make up for it now?

Or – had he disappeared before the Nomu appeared?

Actually, why were the Nomu in *Hosu?* It didn't make any sense! Just like – why was *Iida* in Hosu?! Didn't he have better options for his internship? Wouldn't he want to avoid the place where his brother had been –

Oh.

Oh no – Iida!

"*–there was no turning back, and you said not to stare at the ground…"*

But that was what Midoriya was doing now, whizzing through alleyway after alleyway in search of his friend. Perhaps he could have figured out some sort of tracking song. But then he would have had to sacrifice the speed that his wings granted him.

And then, all of a sudden, a wailing cry filled Midoriya's ears, from one of the abandoned streets he had just passed:

"– YOU'RE STILL JUST A CRIMINAL WHO HURT MY BROTHER!"

"*– and the gravity's pulling me down!"*

With a flip and a turn – Midoriya gritted his teeth into a wobbly smile and stopped singing. He tucked his wings close into his body, and rocketed down, down –

– right into the chest of the Hero Killer.

Earlier that Evening

“You must be the ones who attacked UA,” Stain realised, hovering by the door to the dingy pub that the dwindling *League of Villains* seemed to call home. “You want to recruit me to build up your little group again.”

The shaggy haired man opposite him smiled underneath the dismembered hand that covered his face. “Yeah,” he said simply, “It’ll be great; you’ve got so much experience.”

Stain narrowed his eyes, “And what is your mission?” – an important question. Without true motivation and commitment, the League would be nothing but an obstacle to Stain’s own cause.

“I want to destroy anything that I don’t like,” Shigaraki continued. He picked up a small photo that had been lying, face down, on the bar counter beside him. Showing it to the Hero Killer by holding it between his thumb and forefinger, he revealed the smiling face of a young, green-winged boy, flying high in the air above UA’s Sports Festival Stadium – Canary. “That includes this little brat here.”

Stain knew of this kid.

He’d watched little of the Sports Festival. He wasn’t sure how much he approved of the country pitting its children against each other – fighting mercilessly in an arena for their entertainment. It was like all they cared about was who was the strongest; not who would actually make for a *real* hero. However, that didn’t leave him free from the purge of the media. Canary dominated headlines, sharing the front page with Stain’s noble actions.

He had hoped that the next generation of heroes could finally make a change. But this *Canary* just showed that it would be more of the same. Spoiled kids with unfathomable abilities – beating up those who society labelled as villains for nothing more than the fame and the glory.

“What else don’t you *like?”* Stain pushed.

The villain almost laughed. Putting down the photograph, he pointed back at a torn picture adorning the drab stone walls.

“All Might,” he hissed, “I want him *dead.”*

For a second there – Stain had been hopeful. “What meaning is there

to killing if you don't have real convictions?"

He had been a fool to think they could offer him anything.

Stain fell, tumbling across the alleyway as the green mass kicked at his stomach. He got to his feet quickly, narrowing his eyes at the sight before him.

In the shadow of the alley, the figure that now stood before him resembled an angel, coming to take the dead away. But as he regained focus, the reality became clear.

There was another child there – one with great green wings and a gritted smile – headphones hanging around his neck; his fists raised and ready.

Canary.

"*You,"* Stain hissed, quickly recovering from the blow the boy had dealt; reasserting the grip on his blade.

He watched the boy's eyes flicker to the injured *Ingenium* on the ground beneath him, and then widen as they zeroed in on Native, rested against the wall not far behind Stain. Hm, at least he wasn't entirely focused on just attacking the *villain*.

Canary pulled something from his pocket – hiding whatever it was behind his right wing and fiddling with it for a moment, before sliding it out of view once more.

"M-Midoriya…?" the younger Ingenium stammered, clenching his teeth as he bit through the pain. "P-Please – fly away. This doesn't involve you…"

"Go on," Stain hissed, but the boy didn't move. "Fly home, little bird. If you choose to stay – that flight will have been your last."

But he hoped he would stay and fight – it would guarantee his demise, and a brighter future for the word *hero*. Neither of these children deserved that title. If they didn't now, they never will. One's nature does not change with ease.

"*No,"* Canary retorted, seemingly forcing the word from his throat. "If I go – both of you will die. I won't let that happen."

Stain narrowed his eyes, waiting to see what his new opponent would attempt next.

"Please…" Ingenium sobbed, "I-I should be the one – you're not even a hero!"

"Well, neither are you!" Canary replied, his voice suddenly louder, freer – as if the pressure to succeed had been so great, that it overcame his fear of the danger he faced. "And I don't care what people call me – I have the power to make a difference now. If I don't use it to help anyone I can – then what's the point of it at all?!"

Stain felt a smile creeping across his face. Maybe he had been wrong about this fledgling hero.

Canary ruffled his feathers. Stain watched as several fell to the floor before his friend.

And forwards, he leapt.

His grin on full display, Stain raised his sword and sliced through the air.

The sound of metal clanging against the concrete floor filled his ears. Wind from under Canary's wings blew the fabric of Stain's mask as he rocketed himself around him. The kid was adept in the air – Stain would give him that.

Stain could see his plan. He was smart – manoeuvring himself in Stain's blind spots, yet close to his body, so his enemy didn't have the space to lash out. His movements were elegant, fast – but with all the benefits that wings could grant, there was still one, unavoidable issue. Their large surface area gave Stain more options to strike.

In the cloud of falling feathers that Canary left in his wake, Stain used a second blade to aim at what remained. If it weren't for Stain's Quirk, Canary could have continued that fight. He had kicked him in the jaw – how, Stain wasn't sure; the feathers disorientated him.

But now Canary was on the ground – wings all but gone, and a blood feather, dangling off the end of Stain's knife, spilling its precious contents all over the blade. Before Canary's Quirk faded, Stain had done what he needed to do.

Canary's own body betrayed him – the paralysis forcing him to remain close to the ground, his mouth barely able to move – let alone sing his precious songs.

The remaining feathers faded into nothingness as Stain kicked at them, marching back to complete his mission.

"There are countless heroes out there who are all talk," Stain told his audience. "I thought you were one of them. I don't know if I'm wrong yet. But I'll let you stay alive – for now." He glared down at the little Ingenium, "You're different from these two."

He tilted his head back to take in the look on Canary's face – one of unadulterated horror as he croaked out a desperate plea, "N-No… stay… away –"

Stain felt like he was the honoured executioner of an old king – performing the duty that few could stomach, but it was something that needed to be done. He held his sword above the *hero's* throat, "May your death bring about a better world," he smiled, knowing it would be the last thing the second Ingenium ever saw.

And with Canary's terrified scream, Stain plunged –

Too late.

He leapt backwards, past Canary, to avoid the funnel of fire thrown in his direction.

"Now *what?"* Stain hissed.

And his eyes rested upon yet another interference. A third boy – his left side alight with flames, and on his right, a tiny, green bird rested.

"You need to give more details in times like this, Canary," said the interferer. He raised his phone, its light filling the alleyway alongside his fire. "If it weren't for Siren, I might not have been on time to stop this guy."

Stain sighed, "This day has just been full of distractions…"

Shinso would have been surprised by how good he was at keeping up with Eraser Head in that moment if he wasn't so focused on the task at hand, which was probably a good thing.

They followed the trail of panic and destruction across the city. It was a surprisingly difficult thing to do. But Midoriya was out there somewhere – maybe even hurt by that flying *Nomu* thing – so they had to keep going.

"Heads up, kid!" Eraser Head suddenly exclaimed.

They were at the end of a wide road – completely devoid of traffic. A couple of civilians were backing away from a familiar, grey-skinned beast, wailing and screaming helplessly as it crawled towards them.

Eraser Head didn't hesitate. He jumped into action immediately, his scarf wrapping around the Nomu's neck as he pulled it back and the couple had the opportunity to run.

The monster pulled it away as easily as the last one had, whilst flapping its wings about. That was when Shinso realised Aizawa's scarf wasn't so white anymore.

Shinso gaped at the Nomu – one of its eyes was barely intact; gushing red.

It cried out, turning its head to roll its remaining eye towards Shinso – deciding with whatever brain power it had left that he would be his next target. Only, it didn't get that far.

Shinso shielded his own eyes from the bright light as flames engulfed the winged creature.

It was –

Endeavor?

Then where was –

Shinso looked around frantically as he stumbled backwards, but Endeavor was alone – Todoroki was nowhere to be seen.

The Nomu fell to the ground, either unconscious or dead. Endeavor stood over it, victorious, with a satisfied sneer.

Mr Aizawa was quick to come to the same conclusion as Shinso had.

“Endeavor – where is your son?” he demanded, holding his scarf away from his face as to not touch the blood that marred it.

The number two hero looked to him with a moment of confusion, before recognition washed over his expression, “Eraser Head,” he began, “What are you doing in Hosu?”

“I could ask you the same question.”

“Isn’t it obvious?” Endeavor grinned, “I’m here because I’m a *hero*. I am wherever I’m needed.”

“Right – so the Hero Killer has nothing to do with it.”

Shinso would have laughed if he wasn’t so preoccupied on the fact that now *three* of his friends were missing in action.

His grin morphed into a snarl, before another explosion, from back where Shinso had lost Midoriya, sent another plume of smoke into the air.

“I’m needed elsewhere,” said Endeavor. “But I have a job for you.”

“Is it looking after your son? Because I already do that.”

Endeavor’s flames grew that little bit brighter. “He ran off to a strangely specific location – an alleyway in four-two-ten Echo Street. I can kill these stupid beasts – you can head over there.”

Aizawa looked like he was more than ready to prove that he could kill *him*. “How did he get the location?”

“His phone – how else?!”

The hero clearly didn’t see hanging around as something worth his precious time. He proceeded to take off towards the action without another word, leaving Shinso to come to a profound realisation – pulling his own phone from his pocket.

“Midoriya sent his location!” Shinso breathed, showing it to Mr Aizawa in such haste that he almost dropped it.

And so, they ran.

Shinso had done more running in those last few days than he’d done for… for – well, for a really long time. But he was so pumped up on adrenaline that he didn’t even feel his muscles ache and protest as he

led the way across the rooftops and dingy streets towards his friends.

He had hoped that Midoriya was simply lying, injured, in an alleyway somewhere, now attended to by Todoroki. But, as his mind was cast back to a conversation of theirs earlier that day, he had a terrible, sinking feeling that he was wrong…

Earlier That Afternoon

"H-Hosu?" Midoriya stammered. "We're going to *Hosu?"*

Shinso was just as confused, clutching onto the train ticket that Mr Aizawa had just given him in one hand, as he fiddled with his persona cords with the other. They caught quite a few glances as they walked through the train station in full hero costume. Well, that was mainly because of Midoriya, most likely.

"I told you to contact your guardians, didn't I? We'll be back late tonight," Mr Aizawa explained as they finally boarded the train. Midoriya had taken this long to finally muster the courage to question *why* – Shinso just couldn't be bothered to ask at all.

"Isn't Iida in Hosu?" Shinso remembered vaguely as they sat down. Midoriya was by the window seat with Shinso next to him. Mr Aizawa just across the aisle, mildly displeased by the snoring, overweight man in the seat beside him. "That's not a coincidence, is it?"

"It wouldn't make a difference if it was," his teacher replied simply. "Anyway, the city's on high alert. There shouldn't be much criminal activity around in the main areas. That leaves us with the freedom to practise your skills in the more distant streets."

"T-That's because of the Hero Killer, right?" Midoriya pondered, staring up at Siren, nestled in his air as the train started to move.

"Correct," Mr Aizawa replied through gritted teeth.

Shinso narrowed his eyes. Wasn't Iida's brother hurt by the Hero Killer? Could that be the reason he chose to go to Hosu in the first place?

“H-He’s probably still there,” Midoriya continued, his voice quiet, but loud enough for Shinso and Aizawa to listen in. Whether he was just talking to himself, or legitimately to them, was unclear. “He’s appeared in seven other locations so far, and always attacks multiple heroes, usually at least four – but Ingenium is the only one he’s confronted in Hosu. That means it’s very likely he will reappear there to attack someone else. Probably somewhere really out of the way, where there aren’t many people –”

“We’re not planning on fighting the Hero Killer, kid,” Mr Aizawa was quick to interject.

“Y-Yeah, yeah, I know!” Midoriya panicked. “A-Anyway, you’d probably be a good match up against him – your Quirk would cancel his out. They’re too not sure what it is yet, but they think it’s something paralysis based, considering what the heroes who survived him had said.”

“How many survived?” Shinso frowned, generally interested in the subject now.

“Err, twenty-four including Iida’s brother?” answered Midoriya. “I think he’s killed seventeen though…”

Before Shinso could shudder at the very thought of the man, Mr Aizawa added, “How do you know all this, Midoriya?”

He started to panic again, “I-I just saw a lot of stuff about it on TV and the internet! I wanted to know more about Iida’s older brother… and I kind of ended up researching. He believes that… most heroes are *false* – and that All Might is one of the only *true* heroes…”

‘*Ah, that’s how he knows all these random facts,’* Shinso grinned, ‘*He starts by looking up one thing, and then ends up falling down a rabbit hole of unnecessary information.’*

“That researching hobby of yours might be useful,” Mr Aizawa eventually concluded. “Principal Nedzu has sure taken a liking to you because of it.”

Midoriya just blinked at him.

Shinso raised an eyebrow, “Yeah, well, he *did* praise you for blackmailing him.”

He began spluttering nonsense about how the definition of *blackmail*

did *not* correlate with what he did to Principal Nedzu. Shinso just laughed.

There were few who could make him laugh harder than Midoriya.

Siren was sitting by Iida's hand.

He could barely focus on anything else.

His eyes were blurry from the tears that consistently threatened to pour down his face. The fact that his glasses were long gone didn't help matters either. But, nonetheless, he could still see the glow of Todoroki's hot fire and the steam rising from his ice. He could see Midoriya too, but barely hear the gentle tune that echoed from his lips. His skin had melted into a kind of silver metal. Stain's blades simply glanced off it.

Iida really was crying now, blind to the pain in his arm as great, ugly sobs wracked his body. Siren cocked her head to one side, chirping at him softly.

The fight had been going on for a while. At least, it felt like that to Iida. It felt like an *eternity*.

"No… stop…" Iida sobbed.

Stain had just wrecked Midoriya's mouth guard. A swift kick with those spiked shoes of his, cracked Midoriya's hardened skin. He lay paralysed again, the metal vanishing from his complexion, but leaving a bleeding, cracked wound on the side of his jaw.

"You have to *run…"*

There were knives in Todoroki's left arm. He continued to use his Quirk regardless, the blood sizzling on the surface of his skin.

"…I can't… watch this…"

"You want to make your brother proud?!" Todoroki suddenly cried.

Iida's eyes widened. He looked past the little bird, trying his hardest to focus on Todoroki's indistinct form.

“Then stand up and be Ingenium – become the hero he wanted you to be!”

Iida used a powered kick to send Stain flying backwards.

At the same time, Midoriya’s muscles were finally freed from Stain’s curse of a Quirk. He wouldn’t be able to activate Titanium again – perhaps he should use a speed song. With Iida by his side, they could actually overpower the Hero Killer!

But then –

“I’VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS!” the villain yelled.

Iida was dripping blood everywhere. How Stain had gotten more of it wasn’t too big of a problem to solve. He cried out in absolute agony as his body seized up once more – not because of the physical pain though, but for how much it was costing his grieving mind.

Todoroki raised his injured arm to attack once more, as Midoriya bit through the pain to start to sing again. But Stain had other plans.

He grasped the collar of Midoriya’s jacket, pulling him up and towards his sword. He only needed to take another dose of blood from his cheek to render him motionless again.

“Another move and I will rid this world of *Canary.”*

Todoroki froze – not in the literal sense. His breathing was as heavy and frantic as Midoriya’s, and *he* wasn’t being held at knifepoint.

There was a manic squawk. Midoriya turned his head slightly to see Todoroki grasp Siren from the air, trying to stop her from attacking – but it was no use. She wrestled free of his hand, which was too weak to hold her for long, and she hurtled towards the Hero Killer.

She aimed straight for his face – but Stain was not deterred. With astonishingly quick reflexes, he batted her away harshly, sending her crashing to the ground beside Native, whose blood group meant he still hadn’t been freed from Stain’s power after the first time.

He gazed momentarily at the blood that had appeared on his hand – it

must have come from Siren, as she hovered close to Iida's fallen self, or to Todoroki's injured arm.

If Shinso had been there – perhaps he would have made a sassy remark about it being rather dangerous to lick strange blood off your hand.

But when Todoroki crumpled to the ground too, despite how little the volume of blood that Stain must have tasted, any thoughts of a happier time quickly faded from Midoriya's mind.

They had lost.

The fanatical eyes of Stain turned slowly back Midoriya, still hanging from his iron grip.

He needed to sing something – *anything*.

He could at least still move his mouth – force the words out. Whether he could hold a tune or not was still up for debate. He would have tried, if the knife wasn't still dangerously close to his skin.

The villain gazed at him for a moment – as if staring into his soul and judging its worth. Until, finally, he let him go.

"Don't make me regret letting you live," he said, in a way that strangely resembled Mr Aizawa when he lets another expulsion threat slide.

Oh, how he prayed for him to hurry around the corner in that moment, as Stain's heavy footsteps echoed through the alleyway, marching back towards his fallen friends.

If only Shinso was there – he could stop Stain in no time. He was definitely talkative enough to trick into submission.

If Jiro was there, she could distract him even whilst paralysed – hold him off until the timer of his Quirk ran out.

Uraraka could remove his advantage in a familiar terrain – see how he likes it when gravity was his enemy too.

Even Kasumi's mist could provide an advantage!

Or Mina's acid! Stain would probably poison himself if he dared to ingest –

– that's it!

~Toxic – Britney Spears~

His voice filled the musky air. It was almost painful to bite through the clutches of Stain's Quirk, but it was just weak enough to let him sing the song, if not slowly.

"– you're toxic; I'm slipping under –"

Stain hesitated, glaring back at Midoriya. He narrowed his eyes as he tried to figure out what he could possibly be attempting.

Little did he know, Midoriya wasn't using his power on *him*.

He was using it on everyone else – and their blood.

"*– don't you know that you're toxic?"*

But that was what he was – toxic to this world. It wasn't false heroes that were a poison to society, but villains like *him.*

"*Don't you know that you're toxic?!"*

Stain had started to walk back over to Midoriya – perhaps to finally silence him – but before he could even attempt it, his sword fell to the floor by Iida's face as he clutched his stomach in obvious pain.

He kept singing whilst Stain struggled against what had come over him, desperate to stand and march once more.

"*– don't you know that you're toxic?"*

But Iida was right by him. He may have been paralysed, but that didn't stop him from activating his Quirk.

"*…Slowly, it's taking over me."*

There was a great flash of light from his engines as his leg swung wildly up from the ground. He had no control over its direction. Yet, despite that, it made contact with Stain's already injured chin, making him bite down hard on his tongue.

He stumbled backwards, coughing up his *own* blood as he fell closer to Midoriya.

Now he let his Quirk affect them *all*.

"*Losing my head spinning round and round –"*

Stain cried out in agony as he pushed himself to his feet, pulling another knife from his sleeve –

"*Do you feel me now?"*

And he kicked out at Canary, further damaging his injured cheek to stop him from singing.

The villain seemed manic now – far more than before.

"You are too much of a trouble to keep alive!" he cried and lifted the knife above his throat.

"NO!" Todoroki yelled from behind him.

All Midoriya could do was watch – the moonlight glinting off that blade as Stain lifted him off the ground again, ready to take his life –

A booming laughter filled his ears.

And Stain faltered.

That was an awfully familiar sound. It was one that filled Midoriya's childhood. The sound of the world's greatest hero…

"*Knock, knock?!"*

Stain coughed, his breathing harsh and ragged as his eyes flicked across the alleyway. "W-Who is –"

He dropped Midoriya on the floor – the knife only leaving a sliver of red behind on his skin.

And Stain stood perfectly still, his arms flopping down beside him and his weapon falling by Midoriya's face.

Midoriya forced his head off the ground. But at the end of the street, was –

“Not All Might,” Shinso grinned.

Chapter End Notes

Songs used in this chapter:

Another One Bites the Dust – Queen

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rY0WxgSXdEE

Sing Me to Sleep – Alan Walker – cover by Marcell Olah

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4aH_NIyKMI

Wings – Hurts

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PP4y92c0xV4

Titanium – Sia & David Guetta

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjwqQI3PZhE

Toxic – Britney Spears – cover by KHS and Casey Breves

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pquLcwR_MfU

Art art art art art art art art art –

A_Dust_Spect_Fluent_in_Nothing drew a little comic strip of Midoriya spreading questionable *facts* to Shinso – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 <--- wasn’t sure how else to link it, so here it is in several parts :D – then we *also* have this one from Dust – where Shinso tells a knock knock joke that only Midoriya laughs at (and they have no idea how perfect it is because they haven’t read this chapter yet)

XD – anyway, the joke was apparently: **knock knock** – *who's there* – **Britney Spears** – *Britney Spears Who* – **Britney Spears – Oops, I did it again.**

Then **cloud-the-black-rabbit** (awesome name) from Tumblr has drawn a grown-up Canary, going back to the place where he discovered his Quirk to play the guitar!

yeeterbirdo from Discord did a sweet image of Canary and Siren – with the lyrics to Wings in the background!

Sadistic Cat doodled chibi Canary and Shinso

Sapphiria drew Canary setting fire to the rain!

Pigeonat sketched the Canary squad

And this is *'the surprise'* by everyone's favourite **lovypop17**! It's a lovely drawing containing Canary and the icons of lots of our Discord friends! They also say: "Thank you, wonderful discord people, because everyone is wonderful there :D"

If someone dares comment about how the Stain fight should have gone differently and what songs I should have used instead I will cRY.

This is an edit from 21/06/2020 - There is now an *awesome* animatic of the toxic scene by **Xen** on youtube!!! It's linked at the end - but also hERE!

The Aftermath

Chapter Notes

Hi there!
So, I think I'm going to make the bold decision of saying...
...it's time I changed my upload schedule.

I need order in my life! This is why I must have a schedule! And I could *totally* do four day uploads still if I tried, but it's getting a little harder now that I've started University properly. The next couple of chapters are going to be quite docile and steady - but after that, this story is really going to start picking up. And when I write dramatic stuff, I need to make sure it's done *properly*; I don't want to rush it.

But for now - I'm only extending the schedule by a day! A chapter every *five* days. This means that the next upload should be on Sunday (since today's Tuesday), rather than Saturday. I hope that's ok. I might have to extend it more later, but I just want to see how it goes like this for now.

Thank you for understanding and for reading! :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This was not a scene to be smiling at.

But Shinso was so caught up the fact that he just help defeat the *Hero Killer* with a *knock-knock* joke that he couldn't help himself.

"I can't believe that worked!" he exclaimed, pulling at his persona cords to ensure that his imitation of All Might's voice wouldn't be repeated.

And then Midoriya was laughing too. Crying – but laughing. It was often a combination of the two when it came to Midoriya.

Eraser Head skidded around the corner a couple of seconds later. Once

Shinso was behind him, Mr Aizawa's hair decided that it didn't like gravity anymore as he activated his Quirk. Whatever Stain's Quirk was – seemingly a paralysis one, like Midoriya had assumed, it was immediately countered and the four injured people sprawled across the alleyway sighed in relief as they were freed from the power.

Mr Aizawa reached Iida first, helping him to his feet and interrogating him over what had happened whilst Shinso reached Todoroki.

The ice on his right arm was slowly thawing as he used his fire to remove it. Shinso's eyes rested momentarily on the blades digging into his right, but before he could even… ask if it hurt (which would have been stupid anyway) – Todoroki stooped down again and scooped a small bundle of fluff off the floor – Siren.

Shinso gasped as he took her from his wounded friend.

For a second there, he thought she was dead – from all of the red staining her feathers. But either God had rejected her or Satan had sent her back because she hadn't finished her duty of terrorising everyone and everything yet – because she rolled back onto her front and gave Shinso a disgruntled tweet.

He sighed in relief, and then moved on to check on Midoriya. He was still right by Stain's feet, sobbing silently with a wide smile on his face.

"Can you get up?" Shinso questioned, propping Siren up on his shoulder to free his hands and offer one to Midoriya.

Midoriya didn't falter to grasp the outstretched hand. He put an awful lot of weight on Shinso as he shakily stood up.

Shinso was sure to pull him away from Stain before he fell right into him.

"How many songs did you use?" he demanded, quickly realising that it wasn't an injury preventing him from standing – but sheer *exhaustion*.

He didn't reply at first. He was more interested in Siren hopping from Shinso's side to Midoriya's. "Um, err, after this morning… five?"

"*Five?!*"

"I didn't sing the *entire* song…" he muttered, staring at Stain's

motionless self.

“We should get going,” Todoroki interjected. He reached Midoriya’s other side, pulling his arm around his uninjured shoulder. Shinso did the same on his other side, and they hoisted the slightly shorter boy forwards.

They reached Iida. He hung his head – clutching onto his discarded helmet with trembling hands.

“I’m sorry…” he breathed. “F-For all the trouble I caused…”

“You didn’t cause any of this, Iida…” Midoriya whispered in reply. His voice was quiet – but there was something strangely calming about it. “I’m just glad you’re alive.”

“Shinso?”

He turned back to Mr Aizawa. He had Stain wrapped up in his scarf. The other injured hero had removed most of the villain’s weapons. He smiled at them softly as Mr Aizawa continued to speak, “Can you make him follow us out of the alley?”

Shinso nodded as he turned back to Stain, “Follow us,” he said simply, and the villain began to trudge forwards, whilst Mr Aizawa held on to him like a dog on the end of a leash.

It was surprising how close they were to the main street. That all this madness had happened only a few twists and turns from normality.

When they were free from the darkness of the Hosu back alleys, they were almost immediately bombarded by other pro heroes – sent this why by Endeavor. Todoroki looked a little bitter about it.

Their eyes zeroed in on Stain, standing, head down, beside Eraser Head.

Shinso had never been so tempted to make someone do a stupid dance under his mind control before – but that *probably* would have been pushing it a little…

He whispered that to the others though, just so they could share in his amusement.

Midoriya giggled under his breath. But Shinso felt him sinking – down, down, as he laughed softly. The adrenaline wearing away as his

mind shut down. Falling into a deep slumber…

Midoriya awoke with heavy eyes and a stiff body. He could probably have turned over and fallen back to sleep. But as soon as he was conscious enough to think it through, memories of the fight came flooding back.

He opened his eyes.

“Knock, knock?”

“Who’s there?”

“Got.”

“Got… who?”

“Got you.”

Shinso was laughing at a now blank faced Todoroki, who had bandages wrapped all the way up his arm. He was released from Shinso’s Quirk moments later.

“I still don’t understand why you have to respond in such a way every time,” Todoroki frowned.

“That’s just… how it works,” Shinso replied, confused as to why Todoroki didn’t know this.

Midoriya would have just lay there in his ball of blankets and pillows and watched distantly for a while, if Siren then didn’t appear in his face and chirped loudly in his ear.

He groaned and pushed her out of the way.

“Midoriya?” Iida was the first to say. The other two followed suit immediately after.

He rubbed his eyes and sat upright – feeling extremely groggy, “W-Where am I?”

“The hospital – we’re still in Hosu,” Shinso replied quickly. He was the

only one in ordinary clothing. The rest were in hospital attire. Midoriya realised he was too.

Shinso was sitting in a chair between Midoriya's and Todoroki's bedsides, whilst Iida's bed was opposite. He turned the chair around to face Midoriya properly, a concerned look on his face.

"Are you alright?" he asked.

"You've been asleep for quite a while," Todoroki finished for him.

"H-How long?" Midoriya questioned.

"It's almost five thirty so… I can't remember exactly what time you passed out last night, but it has to be around nineteen… twenty hours at this point?" Shinso explained.

He gaped as he shuffled out of his bed sheets, almost burying Siren in the process. "I-I didn't realise I was that –"

"Quirk exhaustion," Shinso waved him off. "You need to get used to the limits of your Quirk, Midoriya."

He rubbed his head sheepishly, before Siren remerged and decided to nestle in his hair again. "Err… is Siren *supposed* to be here?"

Shinso raised an eyebrow, "Try telling that to Siren."

Midoriya grinned as he imagined the hospital staff trying and failing to remove the little green bird from his side.

"What about you?" Midoriya asked, rubbing at the large plaster on his cheek, "Y-You're not injured, are you?"

Shinso shook his head. "I stayed the night here though – rather than going all the way home. I've just been with Mr Aizawa all day. You didn't miss out on much."

"But… weren't we supposed to be going to –" Midoriya's eyes widened – "The radio show! Oh no, it's Thursday! I'm going to miss it!"

"Yeah, don't worry about that," Shinso smiled. "Oh, actually – Mr Aizawa was going to talk to us all about something later. If you're awake now, I could go and get him," he offered.

"Yes, do that. And then we can get some food for Midoriya," Todoroki suggested. He turned back to him, "I suppose you're hungry. You

haven't eaten anything in a while, since you've been asleep for so long."

Midoriya smiled softly at how thoughtful that was, "Y-Yeah, thanks."

"I'll go now then," Shinso nodded, getting to his feet and hurrying over to the door. "I'll be right back!"

As soon as he was gone, Midoriya saw Iida bow his head. "W-What about you, Iida?" Midoriya questioned, unsure of what else to say. His arms looked far worse than Todoroki's – covered extensively with bandages and one was even in a sling. "H-How are you f-feeling?"

"I'm so sorry, Midoriya," he said immediately, completely sidestepping Midoriya's questions as if they weren't all that important. "I'm sorry you had to use your Quirk so much for me – I'm sorry I got you hurt – I'm sorry any of this happened at all!"

"Iida!" Midoriya exclaimed, "Don't be sorry! W-Wasn't the Hero Killer arrested? H-He was arrested, right?"

Todoroki nodded in reply.

"Y-Yeah. And Todoroki's ok?"

Another nod.

"And I'm ok – and… Native?"

Nod.

"E-Everyone's ok! Native would have been killed if it weren't for you… B-But, are *you* ok?"

He looked up at him, a slight mist covering the inside of his glasses. "Yes… my arm was rather badly hurt, as you can see – but it could have been far worse had the two of you – three, including Shinso – not stepped in when you did."

"Even Siren helped," Todoroki added, pointing at the bird on Midoriya's head. "Shinso said she pecked out a Nomu's eye."

Midoriya stared, "She did *what?"*

"He said angry little birds go for the eyes."

Now Midoriya wasn't sure if he was being serious or not. The prospect

kind of scared him. But before he could question it further, the sliding door to the room was opened once more. From it, came Shinso, Mr Aizawa, Manual and… a man with a dog's head?

Shinso hurried back over to Midoriya. He looked kind of nervous.

"How are you feeling, Midoriya?" Mr Aizawa asked primarily. He was still in his hero costume. Midoriya wondered if he ever took it off at all.

"I-I'm fine, Sir," he mumbled in reply, swinging his legs across the bed to allow Shinso room to sit down next to him.

"Good," he nodded, saying it like he'd just passed a test. "We'll talk later, but for now, you all have a visitor." He turned to the only stranger in the group. "This is Kenji Tsuragamae, Hosu's chief of police."

Midoriya gulped – this couldn't be good…

He invited them to stay seated after the others started to scramble to their feet. Todoroki and Iida stood anyway though, gaping at him when he made a soft *woof* noise in the same way that Shinso and Midoriya did.

"So, you're the UA students who brought down the Hero Killer, huh?" he continued, gazing at each of them in turn.

"We are," Todoroki affirmed quickly.

"And not all of you are even hero course students quite yet, as it turns out."

Shinso and Midoriya exchanged glances.

"I'm here about Stain," Tsuragamae explained. "He has some serious injuries; is in another hospital under strict guard, woof. A couple of broken ribs – some serious burns – a damaged jaw – but most severe of all, we had to get his stomach pumped. He'd been poisoned, you see."

"Well, it is rather dangerous to lick blood off the alleyway," Shinso retorted.

Midoriya struggled to keep his composure.

"Yes, but it is even stranger to somehow ingest such deadly toxins

when all of your blood is clean and nothing else was found in that street. And then, after that, we realised that whatever was in his stomach had now gone, or no longer had its toxic effects, woof. Of course, that was why it was so easy for you to brainwash him, Hitoshi Shinso," he nodded to him. "He was most likely hallucinating – seeing All Might at the end of the road."

"That's because I mimicked his voice with my support item," Shinso explained.

"I see, woof," the chief of police replied. "Although, the question still remains, how was he poisoned?"

His eyes settled on Midoriya.

"With such a versatile Quirk, we can only assume it was something you sang, Canary."

Midoriya faltered but bowed his head and nodded.

"You have a powerful ability," Tsuragamae continued, scratching his ear. "Eraser Head has informed us you were able to destroy one of the Nomu singlehandedly."

Midoriya caught a glimpse of Iida's and Todoroki's expressions from the corner of his eye – Manual's too. They clearly didn't know about this yet.

"See, what you did there was perfectly acceptable, and falls under Eraser Head's responsibility, as your supervisor. He told you to do it, as a pro hero, and you, acting as his intern and a hero course student, acted appropriately, woof."

"After you were picked up by that other Nomu," Mr Aizawa said, glancing at the chief briefly to check if it was ok to talk. After a swift nod, he continued, "I told you to use your Quirk to protect yourself and to protect others. That was very specific wording."

"Like the first time with the Nomu," added the chief, "your confrontment with Stain was under the direct instruction of the pro hero you were interning under. Despite the fact that he wasn't expecting you to run into him, you still used your ability to protect Native and Tenya Iida, as well as yourself, woof. If you had not attacked Stain with the sole purpose of protecting others, we wouldn't be able to twist the paperwork as easily, but thanks to Eraser Head's quick thinking, everything you did was perfectly legal. *However* –"

Oh, Midoriya didn't like that *however*…

"– not all of you acted entirely lawfully."

He continued to explain the rules and regulations around using Quirks as weapons. What heroes could do and what the police couldn't. And, more specifically, what students who didn't act under the order of their supervisor, without a provisional hero licence, were *not* allowed to do.

Todoroki was furious. "Are you saying Iida should have just left Native there to die?! Or I shouldn't have stepped in to stop Stain from murdering all three of them?!"

"So, it's ok to break the law as long as it goes your way?"

There were some backhanded comments thrown between the two of them. Midoriya felt rather helpless as he shrunk back. Shinso was gritting his teeth, seemingly trying to hold back a similar anger to what Todoroki was displaying.

"Calm down, kid," Mr Aizawa suddenly interjected. "Hear him out first."

Todoroki backed down a little, unsure.

"It's a legal responsibility of heroes and of the police department to publicly release the doings of any and all heroes in a villain attack. Stain's broken ribs were from Iida's assaults, whilst his burns were from yours, Shouto Todoroki. However, since none of you are official heroes yet, we may be able to twist the story a little and keep your names out of it. If we were to do that, neither of you would have to face the punishment that you really should, but you wouldn't get the recognition either. But somehow, we still have to explain those burns."

He turned back to Midoriya.

"M-Me?" he squeaked.

"Yes. Endeavor was also around, so, alternatively, we *could* say that *he* defeated the hero killer. But, the poisoning doesn't follow up. However, as I said, your Quirk is very versatile, something you displayed in the Sports Festival, woof. You *can* use fire – and an ability to strengthen your blows *and* something to poison him. Using all this would match up with your Quirk exhaustion as well.

“Todoroki’s injuries could be related to incidences elsewhere in the city, due to how busy last night was. We could say that Iida was there, after running into him with Native and looking very similar to Ingenium, was quickly incapacitated. And then Canary turned up and was able to hold him off until Shinso arrived to stop him, and Eraser Head lifted the effects of his Quirk, woof.”

Midoriya’s heart was in his mouth. Him? Take nearly all the credit?

“This would ultimately mean that Eraser Head, Shinso and Canary would get all the praise for defeating the Hero Killer, despite everything that the two of you did too. But we could tell the truth – the choice is yours.”

“Either way, me and Endeavor will need to take responsibility for being negligent as supervisors,” Manual sighed.

“Endeavor will be punished?” Todoroki questioned quickly.

“He shouldn’t have let you out of his sight in such a dangerous time,” Mr Aizawa explained. “Not even as a father, let alone a pro hero.”

Todoroki turned his head slightly away from them, but Midoriya didn’t miss his slight smirk.

Iida bowed before Manual, apologising for the one hundredth time that day.

“Yeah, you caused us a lot of trouble!” Manual said, batting him jokingly on the head, “Remember that and don’t do it again.”

Todoroki then apologised too, bowing only slightly to the chief of police.

“I know it’s not fair,” and with a bow, he said, “But at least, allow *me* to thank *you.*”

“…You could have started with that,” Todoroki muttered.

“All that’s left to do is first give this information to a responsible media outlet first, making sure that they word everything as we need them to,” Tsuragamae explained, standing upright again. “Thankfully enough, we were able to find someone on such short notice. In fact, I will go and collect them now. It’s not long until Canary is supposed to be on the radio, and the public will want answers for his absence and for the arrest of the Hero Killer, Stain.”

“I-I’ll go and get them now, if you want, Sir?” Manual offered. It seemed like he was desperately trying to get into the chief’s good books.

“I will come to,” Tsuragamae nodded. “Thank you all again. Other officers will be visiting you soon to get your official statements of the case.” And with that, they were gone.

Mr Aizawa sighed, “What are we going to do with you, Problem Child?”

Midoriya sat there and blinked for a moment, before he realised that he was talking to *him*. “W-What –”

“Both of your internships are over, by the way,” the hero continued. “Neither of you acquired very serious injuries, unlike Iida, but it will probably be for the best to keep the two of you out of the public’s eye for a little while. And you can have some time to recover for the rest of the week.”

Midoriya was secretly pleased they never reached Friday – he had *not* been looking forward to Midnight’s *tutelage*…

“As for you, Shinso – you need a hero name. You said you didn’t want to go as Raven so you weren’t well-known as an underground hero, correct?”

He nodded.

“Then you’re going to have to think of something else – and fast. The reporters will be here any second.”

Shinso’s eyes widened at the sudden revelation that he now had a matter of minutes to decided on a name that would most likely stick with him for the rest of his life.

Mr Aizawa hesitated, before turning back to the door, “I’m going to double check with the chief of police as to what exactly I need to do. He wasn’t that clear. If the reporters come up before I do, make sure not to tell them too much yet, understand?”

They all nodded simultaneously, before Mr Aizawa hurried out of the room, and they were left alone.

Silence fell over the four of them before a moment. Midoriya was busy brainstorming hero names (oh, that was quite a good one actually…

Brainstorm –), but Shinso seemed to be preoccupied. He let out a little laugh and sported that sadistic grin of his.

“I can’t believe I stopped the Hero Killer with a knock-knock joke.”

Midoriya snorted, jolting so Siren almost fell off his head. “I-I almost forgot!”

“Imagine the headlines.”

“Oh, please don’t tell them that…”

“Breaking news – the Hero Killer, Stain, defeated by a knock-knock joke and Britney Spears.”

“*Don’t you dare tell them that!”*

Shinso sighed and stood up, wandering over to the fourth bed and collapsing into it, “I’m just collecting blackmail material to use against you; you’re to scary to not have something prepared.”

“B-But –” Midoriya started, but before he could say anything else, that sliding door opened once more.

“MY BABY FLEDGLINGS!”

Shinso sat up and blinked.

“Oh, wow – Aozora’s headphones aren’t surgically fused with her head*,”* Shinso sighed as a familiar, blue skinned woman (who wasn’t wearing headphones, for the first time since Midoriya met her) dashed into the room and threw herself at Midoriya.

“We weren’t told what happened but that you were hurt by a villain a-and then you didn’t turn up to the radio a-and –”

“You’re going to suffocate him,” Shinso deadpanned from across the room as Aozora hugged Midoriya so tightly that Siren had started to tweet at her in warning.

Aozora finally released him, and he was finally able to look at her.

“A-Are you *crying?”* Midoriya gaped.

“No.”

She was – she very much was.

“There were onions, ok?” she sobbed, not even trying to rub the tears from her face as she desperately tried to keep smiling – but it ended up just looking creepy, like most of her smiles did.

“This is a hospital,” Shinso pointed out.

“They were doing surgery on it!” she cried back.

“On an *onion?”*

She pointed at him accusingly, “QUIRK DISCRIMINATION!”

“You don’t look like an onion,” Todoroki interjected.

They all stared at him.

“Thanks,” Aozora said, now crying even harder.

“Aozora’s Quirk is that she’s an onion in Human disguise,” Shinso smirked. “Puffin theory confirmed.”

Aozora just stood up and walked towards Shinso, her arms outstretched, “Can I have a hug, Raven?”

“No – don’t touch me,” he replied with a blank expression.

She just stood there, arms wide, with gallons of tears rolling down her face.

Shinso caved after about a second, “You’re using up your hug tokens.”

“I-I only get one hug token?” she sobbed.

He glared at her, and then sighed, “You get two…”

“Excuse me, but who are you?” Iida questioned from across the room as Aozora practically strangled Shinso in one of her hugs. “Are you the reporter?”

“W-Wait – you’re not a reporter, Aozora!” Midoriya remembered, “You just run the radio!”

“I don’t *just* run the radio!” she exclaimed, freeing Shinso in the process. “But no – I’m not a-a reporter, but… I’m the manager, so I came.”

“Then where’s the reporter?” Shinso questioned.

“T-Talking with Eraser Head,” she explained. “But anyway – hey, I’m Aozora. I co-produce Put Your Hands Up Radio and I’m Canary’s b-boss.”

“I thought I was disowned?” Midoriya frowned.

“You’ve been re-owned,” she whimpered.

“None of this makes any sense!” Shinso acknowledged, throwing his hands up in the air.

“I don’t understand,” Todoroki said, raising his un-injured hand slightly, “what is your Quirk?”

Shinso and Midoriya turned to her with wide, expectant eyes.

She just grinned in a way that almost made Iida recoil.

“Never mind that,” was all she said.

She *so* knew Midoriya wanted to know the answer to that. She was doing this on purpose at this point… so unfair…

“So – you’re not an onion?” Todoroki raised an eyebrow.

Aozora just pointed at him, “Who is this person and where are the adoption papers?”

“Oh, Aozora!” Midoriya exclaimed, “This is Puffin and Crane!”

“*WHAT?!”* she shouted. She’d stopped crying now – but her skin was still shining with the remnants of her tears.

Aozora jumped up and ran over to Todoroki. “You’re Puffin?!”

“This is from our aviary chat, right?” Todoroki asked Midoriya.

He nodded happily.

“Then I suppose so?”

She grabbed his shoulders, “I love you *so much.”*

“Err…”

“She does that,” Shinso sighed, “just accept it.”

That was when the door opened once again, and Mr Aizawa returned

with a rather short woman by his side. She wore a green and yellow dress, with lots of light brown hair that must have taken *ages* to brush, only held out of her eyes by her large, circular glasses.

"Yoika!" Aozora suddenly exclaimed, leaving Todoroki's side and hurrying over to her.

Yoika immediately sidestepped Aozora, as if she was used to her antics, and walked further into the room. "Hello, I am Yoika Kukisha, a reporter with Put Your Hands Up Radio. We are going to be the ones to officially broadcast your story to the world, and we have…" she checked her watch, "exactly two hours before Canary's Hour begins. Before which, we must have the story prepared."

Midoriya gulped, glancing at the others, who didn't look nearly as nervous.

Kukisha pulled a tablet and an electronic stylus from her satchel, she turned it on and the end of the pen glowed bright green, "So, shall we begin?"

Present Mic's Radio Show!

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:30 to 19:30

Canary's Hour

PRESENT MIC: HHHEEELLLOOO my little listener's! And welcome to… *not* Canary's Hour!

It was mentioned earlier today, but Canary won't be in this evening! And we have had *many* – and I mean *many* – calls and comments asking where he is! But don't worry! He is ok! Everyone is *fine* – more than fine now, actually!

I am going to hand over to our wonderful friends down in the *news* department to explain! We haven't had a breaking news story interrupt our usual broadcast in *ages!* We will still be having our normal news section at the end of the show, of course – but let us simply *enlighten* you as to what has been happening over the last day!

See you in a moment!

The usual music for introducing the news segment is played

KUKISHA: Good evening, I am Yoika Kukisha, coming to you live from Hosu City.

It was in these very streets that, yesterday evening, the infamous Hero Killer, Stain, was arrested by police after seriously injuring a pro hero, Native, and a UA hero course student, attending an internship in the area.

Also in the area at the time, was the pro hero Eraser Head, training two interns of his own from UA, the future heroes Canary and Brain Blank. After being separated due to villainous activity elsewhere in the city that evening, Eraser Head was able to instruct Canary to 'use his Quirk to protect others and himself,' until they were able to reunite.

After getting lost and then encountering the villain, Stain, Canary was able to hold off the Hero Killer and protect those under Stain's paralysis Quirk, until Brain Blank arrived to immobilise the villain, and Eraser Head was able to counter his Quirk.

Canary has been in Hosu General Hospital for severe Quirk exhaustion, since the attack began at roughly eight o'clock last night and shall be released shortly.

Meanwhile, Stain, real name, Chiozome Akaguro, is under heavy police guard as he is treated in an undisclosed location before his official trial, where –

The radio disintegrated under his touch.

"He's all they're talking about," he hissed, his nails digging into the wood of the bar counter in frustration. "Him and that pesky little *brat."*

He slammed his fist into the table, sending dust scattering around him and sending liquid sloshing out of the glasses not far away.

"So *annoying* – both of them…"

“What would you have us do?” the man of mist questioned, narrowing his yellow eyes in interest.

“I want to get rid of him,” he snarled, now scratching at his neck in frustration. “He *disintegrated* my *Nomu*. He’s *cheating!* That *Quirk* – I *hate it…*

“And I can destroy whatever I hate, right, Sensei?”

Chapter End Notes

The plot *thickens*

Ha, ha – I have no idea what I’m doing.

It’s that time everybody!

Art time!

First up, we have **xenolis** from Tumblr, bringing us a picture of a

flying Canary with his damaged guitar!

Then Sorinjay who drew a winged Canary

lovypop17 has drawn the League of Villains building up after the Sports Festival ;) and also this, titled, 'someone's gonna die today'.

And blueberrie doodled my avatar!

Then, finally - Cupcake Girl drew the infamous knock-knock scene! XD

The Problem with Fame

Chapter Notes

When you don't know how to spell the word 'pamphlet' and so end up writing 'panflip' and hope that spell-check speaks the same language as your head.

Conclusion: it does not. It never does. Spelling is a dark craft of which I am no expert in.

But the internet seems to understand what the hell panflip means so that's always good… Then again, that would seem to imply that a good number of my fellow humans also can't spell panflip pamphlet.

Oh my God – my cat is on my head – she's on my head what the hECK –

ANYWAYS back to Canary!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The UA uniform is too recognisable. Midoriya knew Iida wouldn't be pleased when he discovered that Midoriya had been shoving his blazar in his backpack, and replacing it with his big, yellow hoody, but he didn't have much of a choice. He was too recognisable. Once upon a time, Midoriya considered himself to be rather plain looking, especially in a world of Quirks. However, his bushy, green hair and the similarly coloured bird which nestled within it, were apparently more of an identifiable feature than he initially thought. Now, that hair was hidden underneath his hood, and Siren had come to appreciate the comfort of the hoody pocket, as long as she wasn't squished.

Midoriya breathed a sigh of relief when he finally stumbled out of the crowded train carriage, pulling his hood down further over his face, weaving in and out of people's paths as he headed up the hill to UA.

His cheek itched. It was his only real injury, excluding a couple of cuts and bruises and of course, Quirk exhaustion, if that counted. They'd tried their best to heal it (without the use of Quirks, since no one strong enough, like Recovery Girl, was on hand), but for some reason, the crack-like shape persisted to mar the side of his face. They said the scar could fade, given time. Midoriya didn't mind it too much though. It was just off centre from the diamond shape that his freckles made, not quite reaching all of them. It was just another feature that would make him that little bit more recognisable, if it decided not to disappear, that was.

He glanced down at his phone, tapping off the music app that blasted the sounds through his new set of wireless headphones (he'd taken the last apart to see how they worked and used a lot of the parts to build the set he'd used in the Sports Festival. The other pair were specifically for his hero costume, which meant he now required a new set for leisure) and blocked out the rest of the world. His finger hovered above his social media app as he continued to trudge forwards.

It had been a few days since he was released from the hospital. Monday – and the incident with Stain had been back on last Wednesday. For the rest of the week, Midoriya had been shut up at home. Shinso had too, so they'd talked for a while over the phone, trying to kill the time. But both had purposely avoided the news for the entirety of their… *lockdown* – for lack of a better word.

Someone grabbed his shoulder. Midoriya almost fell over in surprise as a familiar someone pulled hood down and grabbed his headphones from his ears.

"I called for you at least three times," Jiro sighed. She glanced down at the headphones, now in her hands. "Oh, hey, you listen to Japanese stuff too?"

Midoriya turned off the music and took the headphones back sheepishly. She must have been able to hear the song, despite not wearing the headset herself, because of her Quirk. That, or the music was just loud enough to hear anyway. "Y-Yeah, of course," Midoriya stammered, folding up the headphones and shoving it into his bag, taking the blazar out after a second thought and quickly replacing it

with his hoody, after Siren had untangled herself, of course, and returned to her favourite position – on his head.

“And there’s the other one,” Jiro acknowledged.

Midoriya looked up to see Shinso running towards them, skidding to a halt as Midoriya slung his backpack over his shoulder again.

“Morning,” he panted, “Where are the others?”

“I-I kind of ran out of the train station without looking for Uraraka,” Midoriya admitted guiltily. “Hopefully she went ahead…”

“Understandable,” Jiro nodded as the three of them began to walk the rest of the way to UA, “you don’t want to be recognised, especially after the stunt you two pulled last Wednesday.”

Shinso just grinned, “Knock, knock –”

Of course, Midoriya had sent his location to the Aviary group chat, so it wasn’t just Todoroki and Shinso who were alerted – but Jiro and Uraraka too. Shinso saw this as an adequate excuse to give them a blow-by-blow account of what happened, in his point of view, at least. Technically, he didn’t give them much more information than what was released to the public. All they knew more was that Todoroki was there too, what songs Midoriya used, and how Stain was ultimately taken down.

– and Shinso was very proud of that story.

The three of them were stifling their laughter about it all the way up the hill, with Jiro and Shinso reciting the worst possible jokes they knew to each other. Shinso’s humour was certainly darker than Jiro’s – but she tended to laugh at anything even remotely funny anyway.

“Anyway, did you honour our agreement?” Shinso questioned as they made their way to their respective classrooms.

Midoriya frowned for a moment, before finally remembering, and nodding nervously, “I-I haven’t looked at the news at all… or my social media – Aozora’s going to have a fit…”

“Is this the onion lady?” Jiro sniggered.

“S-She wanted to meet you, actually,” Midoriya recalled. “She said you had a good social media presence or something…” he muttered.

They would have continued the conversation further if they didn't reach the door to class 1-C in that moment. Jiro did a double take before she sighed deeply, "Every *single* time – I *always* forget that the two of you aren't in my class."

"You won't have to worry about that soon enough," Shinso smirked as he reached forwards to slide open the door to their classroom. "See you at lunch."

Midoriya waved feebly as Jiro did the same (although, a little more enthusiastically) and turned back to Shinso as they walked into…

Hell.

"Oh my God, you're *here!"*

"Hey, it's Canary!"

"We're so glad you're ok!"

"I saw it all over the news – I can't believe you took down the *Hero Killer!"*

"U-Um –" Midoriya stammered, taking a few steps back so he almost walked right out of the room.

Shinso just sighed, "Don't you think we've had just about enough of this kind of conversation?"

"We?" Koneko frowned, her face rather close to Shinso's – he probably would have stepped back too, if Midoriya wasn't standing hiding right behind him. "Why would they talk to you about Stain?"

Midoriya saw Shinso's eye twitch and decided that would be the best time to step in the best he could.

"H-Hey – do you think we could get to our desks?" he practically whispered.

The act of him speaking at all was seemingly so powerful, that the entire class immediately parted to let them through, with Ohchi grasping Koneko's shoulders to pull her out of Shinso's way.

"T-Thank you…" Midoriya murmured and hurried through to locate his desk.

Shinso still stamped on her pink cat tail as he walked past.

There was a yowl and a hiss, but Shinso just smirked as he slid into his space behind Midoriya.

Koneko stood there scowling for a moment, stroking the end of her tail. As the rest of the class departed to their various places around the room though, Koneko seemed to recover and bounce back over to Midoriya

“So, how’d you do it?” she asked eagerly, leaning on his desk, tail twitching from side to side from the little hole in her skirt for it.

“H-How did I-I –” he repeated. Of course, he wasn’t too sure what information had been released to the public. Seemingly, the actual details of how Stain had been defeated weren’t known, which was a relief. He resisted the temptation to bury his face in his hands at the thought of *Toxic*.

Come *on* – why doesn’t Present Mic just burst into the room whenever Midoriya was having an awkward conversation?

He realised that he had been sitting there, freaking out internally, for a little too long now. Nearly all the class was staring curiously at him and Koneko was uncomfortably close.

He tried to at least explain that he couldn’t legally give out much details, but instead, his mouth just ended up hanging open, letting out a croaky squeak. Nope, this definitely wasn’t going to work today. Midoriya just ended up flushing red and hanging his head.

Koneko huffed and stood up, her tail still twitching, but seemingly in irritation this time. “I don’t get it – why don’t you talk to us? Do you just not like us or something?”

There were a few people around the class who winced slightly or raised a hand, about to interrupt Koneko and protest as to why that was *not the right thing to say*. Even Ohchi grimaced. But, of course, Shinso beat them all too it.

“Maybe he would if you weren’t so damn intrusive,” he snarled, getting out of his chair, “Now move, before I make you.”

She flinched slightly, instinctively reaching towards her tail and grasping where Shinso had trodden on it. After a moment’s thought, she turned her nose up in the air and stormed back across the classroom to her seat.

Midoriya sighed, of all the days for Present Mic to be late…

The end of the semester couldn't come any faster.

Bakugo was busy beating up Sero and Kirishima for laughing at his hair. What he didn't know, was that Jiro had snuck a picture and already sent it to her favourite group chat. Yes, the 'Class A Ladies' took second place. She liked the girls in her class, they were nice, but *man*, she was really looking forward to having Canary and Shinso in class 1-A too. Involving them in the mayhem was the closest she could get to it at the moment.

She had been hanging out with Mina and Tsuyu, talking about their internships. Jiro had been telling anyone who would listen about the dentist incident. It was the only exciting thing that happened. As it turns out, most of the others hadn't come across anything really story worthy at all. Tsuyu was the exception and then, of course, there was Todoroki and Iida…

Quite a lot of the class were crowded around them at the moment. Kaminari was going on about Stain's morals and stuff.

There had been no real footage of Stain's defeat, or him announcing his motives to the world, but some anonymous person out there, had made a rather terrifying video explaining his ideology to anyone who would listen, and that number turned out to be staggeringly high.

However, that number most certainly did *not* include Iida – who not only had serious damage in his arm from the villain, but his brother had been put in a *wheelchair* by him. Seriously, Kaminari? Think through what you're saying!

Well, he did realise his mistake, but only after he'd called the guy *cool*. He hadn't known Todoroki was involved too but come on – he *definitely* should have thought about Iida.

"What about Canary?" questioned Ojiro. "Wasn't he there?"

"Oh yeah, everyone's saying he defeated the guy, alongside Mr Aizawa and someone called *Brain Blank*," recalled Sero, finally freeing himself from Bakugo's vengeful grip.

“It’s super manly!” Kirishima exclaimed, “Imagine having to go up against someone as scary as that and *sing!* Even worse, he’s not even had any of the training that we have. But he *still* came out on top!”

“I’m super curious – what songs do you think he used?!” Toru wondered, bouncing up and down. “Hey, Iida, could you tell us?”

“If it hasn’t been released to the public, he probably shouldn’t say anything,” Uraraka quickly interjected.

“Oh yeah, good point,” she pouted (well, Jiro assumed she did – it wasn’t like she could see her facial expression).

“Hey, Ochako?” Mina frowned, “Aren’t you close friends with Midoriya?” her face suddenly split into a wide smile upon realisation, “Wait, are you one of the five he talks about on the radio?! Like, Owl and Raven and whatnot?”

Uraraka hesitated, but then realised that there wasn’t really any way of getting around it, so she just smiled and nodded, “Yeah, I came up with the names, actually!”

Mina gasped, “What would mine be?!”

“Err… Flamingo?”

Jiro watched on in vague interest as Uraraka started labelling as many of their classmates as they could with bird names. All the while, Iida frantically attempted to get them all to sit down before Mr Aizawa arrived.

Jiro was an incredibly observant person. She blamed it on her Quirk. So, it wouldn’t have been a surprise to anyone that she was the only one to notice one of her classmates seeming a little… off.

Bakugo sat in his chair, right next to hers, glaring down at his phone, practically *seething* with anger.

Jiro would have expected him to be a little more infuriated with his hair situation, or at least leave Kirishima and Sero regretting laughing at him. But all he did was drag them by their collars for a bit and spit angry words at the two morons for a moment. As soon as the talk about Canary had started, he took himself away, as if he didn’t want to hear a word of it. But… tilting her head a little, Jiro could spy the news article on his phone:

The Hero Killer, Stain, Defeated by the Power of Music!

She chuckled to herself, thinking of the alternative title that Shinso had messaged them about. But there would have been no *way* that the officials or whoever was behind that kind of stuff would have let that happen. The public wouldn't have had much faith in their heroes if they discovered that one of the most dangerous criminals at the moment, connected to the League of Villains and everything, was taking down by a *knock-knock joke*.

But Bakugo wasn't laughing.

He angrily closed the tabs on his phone – there were a lot of them, all on Canary.

Jiro narrowed her eyes, what did Bakugo have against Canary?

Whilst Bakugo spent his week getting groomed in that *useless* internship. Deku… well, look at him! He's all over the freaking news!

Canary this – Canary that – it's all anyone's talking about! Well, that or the Hero Killer – and the bastard's connection to the League of Villains. Bakugo *fought* the League of Villains, but no one seems to care much about *that*.

They don't seem to care that he *won* the *Sports Festival*. One of the biggest freaking sporting events in the *world*, but all that said world focused on was stupid *second* place!

Deku went from the Quirkless loser that would never amount to anything, to a hero, supposedly on an equal playing ground with people like *him.* Bakugo hadn't even expected Deku to get into UA – but he had supposed that general studies was good enough, as long as he wasn't following him around anymore. But then… he got a *Quirk* – and a weird as hell one too. Singing? What kind of a superpower is *singing?* But Bakugo barely won the Sports Festival! What would have happened if Deku didn't have that Quirk exhaustion problem? Would he have… actually won?

That loser who'd been beneath him all this time had suddenly soared past – and barely even giving him a second glance as he did so.

But with internships over, Bakugo had something else to pay half a mind to – exams. It wasn't like he wouldn't pass – he knew he would. He was in the top three of the class or something – he didn't really pay attention to that. But Ponytail and Glasses were far too nerdy anyway.

He also had the task of beating the term's lessons into Kirishima's skull. And for a guy with a hardening Quirk, Bakugo just had to hope he wasn't really that dense.

He was eating lunch with him now. Him and some of the other idiots who ended up following him around – like upgraded versions of the morons from middle school (not Deku though, zero multiplied by anything was *still* zero). That included Elbows, Racoon Eyes and Sparky, as well as Weird Hair, of course. Rather than focusing on the fact that most of them were ranked near the bottom of the class (or *the* bottom of the class) for midterms, they had instead diverted their attention to trying to stomach a small piece of Bakugo's lunch.

Sparky was stupid enough to try and douse his mouth with water, which just made it worse. Elbows was just suffering – Weird Hair was at the very least, smart enough not to follow in their example. But Racoon Eyes' acid must have messed up her tongue or something, because she didn't seem to have a problem.

"Seriously, it's not that bad," she protested, trying to sneak another bite as Bakugo just glared at her.

He knocked the bottle of hot sauce across the table to her, "Eat your own food."

"Oh, thanks!" she exclaimed, and happily poured the spice over her natto.

"You're *crazy,"* Sparky gasped, wheezing for air as if that would help.

"Why would you do this?" Sero added, shoving mouthfuls of rice into his mouth in hopes that it would take the spice away.

"I could ask you the same question," Kirishima pointed out. "Plus, it's not very manly to steal someone else's food."

"Ex-freaking-actly," Bakugo grumbled.

As the others started glancing around the food in search of some kind of imbecile brings milk to school for whatever reason, Bakugo ended up catching the eye of the only other one of his classmates that he can

somewhat tolerate from time to time – Jiro.

She's the kind of no-nonsense, chill kind of girl who really can't be bothered to deal with the drama, despite knowing absolutely *all* of it. She never got on his nerves, hardly even spoke to him and generally just kept her distance unless they were paired together in class. Bakugo could respect that. She nodded at him distantly and began to walk off across the room in search of a place to sit and eat. Bakugo would have somehow prodded Racoon Eyes to invite her over or something – there was a space free on their table, but then…

Across the hall, Earphones slid into a chair on a table of five others. There was Pink Cheeks, Icy-Hot, Glasses, that brainwashing bastard and… *Deku*.

It took only a few seconds for Bakugo to make the connection. These were… these were the people from Deku's freaking group chat! With the stupid bird names and everything!

Bakugo gritted his teeth.

The semester was almost over. Once exams had passed, and that summer camp too, the winter term would begin. With it, it was very likely that Deku and his little *friend* would fill the spaces left empty in class 1-A. But it looked like they'd already made themselves at home. All happy and smiley and… *chatty*.

Damnit!

This was *his* dream! He was going to be number one! The best the world had ever seen!

And Deku just had to come along and ruin it.

Why? He didn't understand.

Why wouldn't he just *leave him alone?!* Just disappear – fade from Bakugo's life just like he *should* have done long ago?!

Bakugo had always been the one with the most potential. He was *born* to be a hero – with a Quirk greater than *any* of the other powers his old classmates possessed. Deku never stood a chance.

But now *he's* the one with the power – the popularity. He was the one that everyone was watching. The one with the potential and the drive.

Bakugo slipped into the shadows – a background character in Canary's origin story.

A Few Weeks Later

Oh my God – oh my God – oh my God – oh my *God!*

Midoriya felt like *crying.*

He gripped the sheet of paper, revealing his exam results, so tightly that it probably wasn't far from ripping in his shaking hands.

He'd passed.

Well, a little more than passed, actually, but that factor was irrelevant.

Shinso didn't think so.

"You got *eighty percent?"* he gaped, leaning over Midoriya's shoulder and staring at the percentage Midoriya jotted underneath the raw mark.

"U-Uh – I little under, actually. I just… rounded up…"

"By how much?"

"It was like… seventy-nine and a half or something…" he mumbled nervously, placing the sheet of paper down on his desk and trying to flatten out the creases he'd made.

Shinso just sighed and stared at the ceiling for a moment, as if contemplating why he'd even bothered asking. "I'm out –" and he walked the whole two meters back over to his own desk and fell back into his chair.

"W-Well, what did you get?" Midoriya questioned curiously, barely getting over the fact that *oh my God, he passed!* – and now focused on the second most important (or, arguably, the first) factor of the day.

“Barely seventy,” Shinso said, not leaving the paper detailing his marks from each subject in Midoriya’s line of sight for long enough for him to criticise his skills in working out percentages (poor).

“B-But you passed!”

Shinso grinned, “Hell yeah, I passed. If that’s not a pass, then I’m scared to ask what *is.”*

Midoriya smiled wildly, “Then we’ve done it!”

“Did you seriously have any doubt that you would get into the hero course?” Shinso asked, raising an eyebrow and crossing his arms.

“I-I could have *not* passed,” Midoriya acknowledged. “And we *had* to pass the end of term exams or else we wouldn’t be allowed in next semester and then –”

“I’m going to stop you right there,” Shinso interrupted, holding up a hand. “*You were always going to pass the exam.”*

“But there’s always a possibility that –”

“Don’t even start,” Shinso groaned. “This discussion is already giving me a headache… just *accept the truth.”*

“But I –”

“*Accept it.”*

“– What I don’t get is why there was a question on *hero law!”* Ohchi protested loudly.

Shinso rolled his eyes, struggling with a moment of déjà vu. [*I can’t wait to get out of this class*] he signed to Midoriya, who struggled not to smile, before turning to Ohchi and saying, “Because this is *general studies?”*

“Exactly! Not the *hero course!”*

“General studies,” Shinso repeated. “As in – we’re supposed to gain a *general* spread of information. Besides, it was only one question.”

She threw her hands up in the air, “But *still!”*

“Speaking of the hero course!” Present Mic interjected. He’d only just arrived, walking into the room with wide eyes at the argument, and

only speaking when he finally had the chance to move away from the awkward subject.

He pointed dramatically at Midoriya and Shinso, “You passed the end of term examinations, *congratulations!* Well, all of you did, which is great to here! But for Shinso and Midoriya, this only means *one thing!”*

“Can we leave your class yet?” Shinso smirked.

Present Mic pretended to look hurt. Then again, that might not have been pretend. “I was about to tell you how much I was going to *miss* having you in our wonderful number!”

“Siren’s coming with us,” Shinso pointed out, “you must be the least bit relieved.”

He hesitated, “Err, where is she?”

The class looked back to Midoriya, who instinctively looked to his hair – but the bird didn’t appear. He just shrugged.

“She’s probably hiding a body,” Shinso said ominously.

Everyone simultaneously narrowed their eyes at him. But *they* didn’t know that Siren almost *blinded* a Nomu so…

They most likely didn’t even know what a Nomu *was*.

“Moving *swiftly* forwards!” Present Mic wisely decided to proclaim. “We have a *glorious* final assembly with our wonderful Principle Nedzu –”

“You know he’s being sarcastic when he says things like *glorious,”* Shinso whispered to Midoriya.

Midoriya sniggered.

“– twelve o’clock next *Monday!* I know, weird, to just come into school for an assembly and then be off for the summer, but here we are! This means that *today* is your very last school day of the first term!” Present Mic paused and sniffed loudly, like he was trying not to cry (most likely just being melodramatic again though). “And now… if your *very last English lesson.”*

“Err,” Kana raised her hand uncertainly as she spoke, “don’t we have you next term, Mr Mic, Sir?”

“It’s just favouritism,” Ohchi sighed, giving Midoriya a look which he wasn’t too sure how to interpret. Was she just joking? Maybe she hated him for it! Maybe he was just over thinking this… but *maybe* –

“Don’t you also teach English to the hero course?” Shinso recalled. “Besides, it’s not like Midoriya needs to *do* anything in these classes anyway.”

“What I’m *really* going to miss,” piped up Tachibana, “is your Quirk analysis!”

“Oh, wow, I’m just loved,” Shinso said sarcastically to no one at all in particular.

“I’m going to miss Shinso’s ability to shut Koneko up,” stated Watanabe.

They didn’t do much that English lesson.

Well, they learnt how to throw insults at each other in both Japanese *and* English – more or less. So, at least that was something.

Midoriya wasn’t too sure if he was going to miss class 1-C. But, after everything – at least it ended on a happier note than it began.

“They had to pass, right?” Uraraka reaffirmed, leaning out of the door to class 1-A and peering down the long hallway, “Pass and they get into the hero course?”

“That is what they informed us, yes,” Iida nodded, standing close by, with an extra two **pamphlets** for the summer camp in his grasp. “Perhaps they were speaking with Principle Nedzu at lunch. That would explain why we didn’t see them.”

“We saw Siren though,” Jiro pointed out. The bird had spontaneously appeared in their classroom earlier that morning to hang out with Kouda. No one knew what initiated it – and Kouda didn’t really understand either. But it resulted in several interesting revelations including, but not limited to, Mina being absolutely terrified of the creature; Siren cosying up to only Kouda and the rest of ‘the aria’, but no one else – and the discovery that she seemed to have some kind of

personal vendetta against Bakugo, which no one but Uraraka could vaguely understand. And Uraraka refused to explain, which made it even *more* intriguing.

Then again, Jiro *was* a naturally curious person. She liked to be in the know. She never really *did* anything with the information she collected; she just liked to hoard it.

“Wherever Siren is, Canary isn’t far behind,” Todoroki acknowledged.

“Speaking of the devil,” Jiro sighed. She could already hear the distant sound of beating wings, hurtling through the corridors.

The green blur rocketed past them, did a loop in the air, and then flung herself back towards them, stopping millimetres from the top of Iida’s nose.

Tweet!

“Hi, Siren!” Uraraka giggled.

Out of all of them, for some reason, Siren decided that Jiro’s shoulder was the best one to perch on this time. But this of course meant that she was so distracted by the little ball of feathers that she didn’t manage to predict the arrival of the last two members of their group until their faces appeared at the doorway.

“Canary!” they all exclaimed at once.

Shinso came into view and blinked at them, “This is the second time today – the favourite is really very clear.”

“Shut up, Shinso – no one loves you,” said Jiro with zero remorse.

Midoriya looked a little panicked, not seeming to understand Shinso’s and Jiro’s odd sense of humour as he pretended to be shot and tumbled out of sight.

Siren just chirped that laugh-like noise of hers, as if she understood too.

“B-But the exams – how did they go?” Uraraka pressed eagerly, standing on the balls of her feet in anticipation.

“I think it’s unfair they made us wait this long,” Shinso sighed, probably avoiding Uraraka’s question on purpose, just to drive her up the wall. “Marking first-year general studies must be pretty low on

UA's list of priorities."

"Oh, just tell us!" Uraraka cried, grabbing the attention of the rest of class 1-A, still milling around the classroom behind them.

"Of *course*, we passed," Shinso huffed. "You think *he* wouldn't?" he gaped, pointing at Midoriya.

"You some kind of secret super genius or something then?" Jiro smirked as Midoriya blushed furiously and messed with his hair in embarrassment.

"You should see his notebooks," continued Shinso, "he's drawn freaking *mathematical diagrams* on his Quirk."

Jiro narrowed her eyes, "How –"

"They're just decreasing exponential functions," Midoriya muttered, as if that explained anything at all.

"Why are we talking about this when we should be excited that you're *on the hero course!"* Uraraka yelled, punching the sky.

If they hadn't caught the rest of the class' attention before, they certainly had now.

"We were talking with Principle Nedzu at lunch," Midoriya continued rather quietly, increasingly aware of Jiro's approaching classmates. Most of them had now joined them, forming a small crowd by the door. "We've filled all the requirements – b-but Mr Aizawa can still choose to not accept us if w-we don't do well in the summer training camp."

"Wait, *you're* coming to our camp?!" Mina suddenly exclaimed, pushing past Jiro unintentionally harshly. She somehow didn't knock Siren off Jiro's shoulder though – her little talons must have been gripping onto Jiro's blazer rather firmly.

Midoriya backed off a little, clearly hesitant about the sudden attention.

Jiro thought he'd been getting used to it by this point. She wasn't sure if he would still be classified as mute at all for much longer. But, nonetheless, he was still very shy.

"I have two spare **pamphlets** on the matter!" Iida interjected

gleefully. “It is imperative that you have acquired all the necessary equipment before we leave next week!”

Shinso waved him off, “It’s fine, we’ve already been given them,” he explained, indicating to the black rucksack hanging off his shoulder.

Iida looked rather disappointed he couldn’t prove his organisation skills worthy.

“Hi! It’s so good to meet you, Canary!” interrupted Hagakure, also bouncing into view beside Mina.

Shinso looked to Jiro with an expression that perfectly conveyed the message: *Yep, I am certainly loved by all* – in a very sarcastic tone.

Midoriya just let out a nervous squeak and a feeble wave.

Siren hopped off Jiro’s shoulder to reach Midoriya instead. Her very presence seemed to make the tension fade from his shoulders.

“It’s good to meet *both* of you,” said the omniscient Yaoyorozu. “My name is Yaoyorozu. I’m the vice president whilst Iida is the head representative of class A. We look forward to having you here.”

Midoriya and Shinso just stared at her like they didn’t know it were possible for hero course students could be sane up until that moment.

“Well, have you got everything the summer camp requires?” Iida questioned, who was *very* adamant that they were prepared.

Shinso gave him a look, “I’m planning on getting a sleeping bag like Eraser Head’s and only emerging for training – I don’t need anything else.”

Midoriya signed something to Shinso quickly, which prompted a slight grin.

From the context of the situation and the way he moved his hands, Jiro could only assume he’d just compared Shinso to a butterfly. Now there was the ridiculous image of a massive, purple, Shinso butterfly in Jiro’s head and she couldn’t help but smile at it too.

“Then why don’t you come with us to the mall tomorrow?” Hagakure suggested enthusiastically. “We’re all going to buy the last few things we need for camp – you could tag along!”

Midoriya shook his head immediately, almost shaking Siren free from

his hair, where she'd decided to nestle again.

"Why not?" Uraraka questioned, pouting slightly in disappointment.

"I-I – um –" he stammered, waving his arms about in what was definitely *not* sign language, and just sheer panic. But when it came to Midoriya, there was often a thin line between the two anyway.

"I'm not going," Todoroki shrugged. "Don't worry about it."

"Wait, why aren't you coming?" Jiro frowned.

"Busy," he said simply.

"Bakugo's not coming either!" Kirishima interjected, he too, pushed past Jiro without realising it, and held out his hand to Shinso, who was the closest of the two. "Hey, I'm Kirishima! We've met before, but not like, officially."

Shinso took his hand after a moment's hesitated, "Shinso."

"And it's… Midoriya, right?" Kirishima reaffirmed, now ready to shake Midoriya's hand too, "Or do you prefer Canary?"

Midoriya just shrugged sheepishly and shook Kirishima's hand weakly.

"Come on, Canary! It'll be fun!" Mina insisted.

"You'll have to go out shopping anyway at some point," Jiro pointed out. "So, if it's your fame you're worried about, at least you'll have us around this time." She really just wanted to hang out with Canary and Shinso more – even if that meant dragging them along with the entire class, at least it was something.

Midoriya's gaze flipped between the various members of his soon-to-be-class unsurely. But then, after an encouraging tweet from Siren, he clenched his fists and nodded.

"That's awesome, man!" Kirishima exclaimed.

"We look forward to seeing you again tomorrow, in that case," Yaoyorozu smiled.

"Yeah!" Mina cried, "You won't regret this; that's a promise!"

Iida sent them his exact global position when trying to get everyone to be in the same place at the same time the next day. It didn't help much, but, eventually, the large group came into view.

They didn't notice Midoriya at first. He had his hood pulled up over his face in a desperate attempt to stay unnoticed. He only owned two hoodies – the bright yellow one and this grey one, which had the word *hoody* written across the front, as part of a set of rather ironic tops that his dad had been gifting him over the years. He had a strange sense of humour – not as weird as Shinso's though.

He had followed Siren through the crowd, who was now sitting in Kouda's palms and staring at him, beckoning him over with those big, beady eyes of hers.

"Hey, there he is!" Mina exclaimed once Midoriya reached her side, "I thought you'd chickened out!"

"This place is *huge*," Shinso gaped, not making a big deal of Midoriya's arrival – thankfully. But, he was right. Midoriya had never been to the mall before, let alone actually hung out with *friends* outside of school or the radio station. Clearly, Shinso hadn't either.

Iida was muttering about adequate footwear for the trip – and instructing how the class could split up to visit all the places they needed to, but Midoriya was rather transfixed on the mall itself. There were shops designed with so many different Quirks in mind – from modified tops to enlarged shoe sized. He was so busy darting his head around, that he was only brought back down to Earth by (ironically) Uraraka, tapping him on the shoulder. He jumped a little at the notion.

Uraraka laughed, "Where do you need to go, Canary?" she asked.

Midoriya blinked – he probably should have thought of this before coming here. Well, he *had* – he had a list of what he needed. But that didn't mean he knew which shop would have what and where that shop might possibly be or if it was even sold in the mall at all or –

"We'll just sit down in a café for a bit or something," Shinso sighed, walking over to Midoriya after taking Siren from Kouda, and then plonking her down in Midoriya's hands. "Then we'll figure out where to go from there."

“Oh, we could come too!” Mina suggested eagerly.

‘Wow, everyone sure is excited to hang out with me, huh?’ Midoriya realised worriedly. He wasn’t too sure if this was a good idea yet…

“Look, we’ll get a large table at that coffee shop over there, and we can all go back and forth from that, sound like a plan?” Jiro suggested.

Thankfully, that seemed to be ok with everyone else, and moments later, Midoriya found himself sitting at said coffee shop, watching Siren peck at his muffin, whilst surrounded by his more *comfortable* group of friends – with everyone else in class 1-A heading off in different directions around the mall.

“Sorry about that, Canary,” Jiro said, sipping at her coffee and grimacing slightly. She’d gotten the same as Shinso, which was, seemingly, very strong.

He blinked at her, “I-It’s ok!”

“Everyone in our class is really nice,” Uraraka smiled. “You’ll get used to them eventually. Sorry if they’re a little overbearing at the moment. They’re just super excited to meet you properly!”

“Y-You guys can always go off shopping. You need t-to get stuff for camp,” he insisted, pulling at his falling apart muffin a bit and popping some in his mouth before Siren could murder it all.

“I’ve got pretty much everything,” Jiro replied. “But I think I’d like a really big duffle bag for all my stuff…”

Midoriya suddenly came to the profound realisation that not everything in the world would fit in his trusty yellow rucksack and his school PE bag. “Y-Yeah… I might need one of those too…”

“I’m all set too,” Uraraka admitted, “Although, some bug-spray might be handy.”

“We’ve always got Siren to deal with the bugs,” Shinso pointed out, accepting Jiro’s discarded coffee.

“What do you need, Shinso?” wondered Iida. Iida himself was bound to be already fully prepared, so there was no point in asking him too.

“I wasn’t kidding about the sleeping bag,” Shinso replied. “Other than

that, I don't really see what else I would need."

"H-Have you checked the manual thing?" Midoriya questioned.

"Yeah, I'm sure I've got most of what I need lying around at home."

"The **pamphlet** says we don't need to bring sleeping bags or roll mats!" Iida protested. He'd just pulled a copy of the blue guide from his pocket.

Shinso finished his coffee and slammed the empty cup down on the table, "I will be a caterpillar and no one can stop me."

"Um, excuse me?"

The four of them turned around. Standing beside Midoriya, was a girl with reddish purple hair, and little fangs sicking out the corners of her mouth. She grinned wildly when Midoriya's eyes met hers.

"Oh my gosh, hi!" she continued, "You guys are from UA, right? We saw you on the Sports Festival!"

At the word *we*, her two other friends scurried forwards. One with dark hair, styled similarly to Uraraka's, but a little longer, and the other had her camera phone out, not turned on yet, but clearly excited to use it.

"You guys were so cool!" the last one gushed. "And, you're Canary, right?"

He smiled and rubbed his head, knocking the hood down in the process.

"Hi!" the first girl repeated, "I listened to your show for the first-time last Thursday, and I honestly don't know *why* I never tried before. But all this news on Stain got me intrigued. Is it true you helped take him down?"

Midoriya knew this would happen. It was exactly why he didn't want to come out in the first place.

But, at the same time, he was glad his friends were there. He didn't know what he'd do without them.

The three girls weren't the only ones to come up to him that day.

He met a guy who'd called the radio before when buying duffle bags

with Jiro – given an autograph to a little boy who dragged his parents over him to say hello – almost passed out when someone pointed at him, yelled, and ran up to show off *merchandise of him* that he'd just bought.

But, as the encounters became more and more frequent, with more people obviously realising he was in the area, he… started to feel that little bit more confident. It wasn't that bad, greeting all these different people and smiling at them. The compliments were a little overwhelming, but, in the end, all he was doing was making them happy – and wasn't that the first step towards being a hero anyway?

Shinso was busy glaring at the selection of sleeping bags, decided which would 'grant him high caterpillar capacity' – whatever that meant, but it was taking him so long that he insisted they should go back to the coffee shop and meet him there. Midoriya had left his new duffle bag with him so he could shove whatever sleeping bag he decided on inside.

Jiro had met up with Yaoyorozu and, after some debate, promised she'd see Midoriya later and followed her friend off to get a duffle bag for her too.

Iida had disappeared after he apparently spotted an old classmate following Mina and Hagakure into a swimwear shop (whatever the story behind that was, Midoriya didn't want to know).

That left him with just Uraraka – who had only just located the bug-spray she wanted.

"This stuff is way too expensive," she pouted, glaring down at the bottle in her hand. "Maybe I should go back and get a cheaper one?"

"I-I can always help!" Midoriya offered. He had plenty of money stored up from the radio station anyway.

"Oh, no, it's ok!" Uraraka insisted. "I feel bad – anyway, I don't think they're taking us anywhere *tropical*. Some weaker bug-spray should be fine," she nodded, satisfied with her conclusion. She ended up paying for the cheapest bottle available.

They were walking back over to the café when she stopped suddenly and gasped loudly, before throwing her hands over her mouth.

“W-What is it?” Midoriya questioned curiously.

“N-Nothing!” she exclaimed, “I just had an idea but – you can’t know!”

Midoriya blinked at her – what now?

“I’ll see you back at the coffee shop, ok?” she insisted, already starting to back away into the crowd. “You’ll love it, I promise!” – and with that, she was gone.

Midoriya stood still for a moment longer, watching Siren tweet furiously after Uraraka’s disappearing form, diving over the heads of other passers-by as she tried to herd Uraraka back to Midoriya.

He sighed and smiled. This whole day actually hadn’t been that bad.

He’d had a horrible, sinking feeling, weighing him down all morning as he waited for the clock to strike twelve thirty, so he could head off from home and catch the train to Kiyashi ward shopping mall. But, now that he was actually here, he could finally say that he *enjoyed* hanging out with friends who enjoyed hanging out with him! Even the people who recognised him as Canary had been nice and open hearted – no troubles at all!

“Well, well, well – is that Canary?”

Midoriya smiled and glanced to his left, where a black hooded man had just appeared. “Err, h-hi!” he squeaked as he uncomfortably put his arm around his shoulders. “N-N-Nice to meet you…”

“Think you could give me an autograph?” he asked, pulling a crumpled up receipt from his pocket, seemingly for Midoriya to sign. “I’ve listened to some of your shows – you really are becoming quite popular, aren’t you? You really dominated the headlines after you defeated the Hero Killer – all over the front pages…”

“O-Oh, um – well, it wasn’t r-really just me. I helped but I –”

“Now, now! Don’t throw away the credit!” the man smiled.

Midoriya didn’t like that smile. And he’d seen a lot of creepy smiles. But this one wasn’t like Aozora’s or Shinso’s or even Mr Aizawa’s – it was… *wrong*.

“You’ve got a very interesting Quirk… it shares some parallels with

mine."

And then that receipt in his free hand turned to dust – lost to the gentle breeze.

His other hand – it was around Midoriya's throat. He didn't like this – he didn't like this at *all*.

Midoriya turned to the stranger, shaking as he met his bloodshot, red eyes through dirty blue-grey hair.

"Oh right! From your point of view, we haven't met at all, have we? After all, you weren't in class 1-A when I joined them at the USJ…"

"As soon as all five of my fingers touch your throat – well, it'll be fast." Shigaraki taunted the trembling boy, hovering his last finger tantalisingly close to his soft skin. "You'll be nothing but nothing more than dust and powdered bone. Much like how you left my Nomu."

"T-The heroes… would… catch y-you," Canary barely managed to utter. Shigaraki could feel his throat rising and falling beneath his hand as panic wracked the little hero's body. It would be so easy to crush the bird before he even had the chance to take flight – so fragile – so delicate. It was a wonder how Stain had such a hard time against him.

But he was having more fun *talking* to him at the moment. Pointing out all those *sheep* – the people who milled around the mall, with sickeningly happy, smiling faces. So many had the potential to cause such devastation, like he could – like *Canary* could. It was only their morals that stopped them. How did they know that everyone around them had the same ideals?

They were sitting on a bench together now – Shigaraki's hand never leaving Canary's neck.

"When it comes down to it," Shigaraki sighed, "I hate basically everything. But above it all, it's you and the Hero Killer who seem to drive me up the wall the most right now."

"B-But… Stain… yours?"

Shigaraki almost laughed. Canary was so scared – he could barely speak! “Not technically, but that’s what the media made it look like,” he admitted. Stain had never been on his side. But that didn’t make any sense to him. They were doing practically the same thing! The Hero Killer destroyed what he hated most, just like Shigaraki. He told Canary so.

“You fought him,” Shigaraki smiled. “But you haven’t fought me. Have you heard of me at all?”

He was still shaking. It took a moment for him to open his mouth to reply, but nothing distinguishable came out.

“Ah, yes,” Shigaraki remembered it now, “you’re selectively mute, aren’t you? How silly of me. But, either way – you can at least listen to me.”

“I-It’s not like I-I have a c-choice,” he whispered nervously, clamping his mouth shut as soon as he said so, like he was scared something else would fall out.

Shigaraki’s cracked lips smiled wider. “No, you don’t.” He sighed and looked back at the crowd, buzzing with life and activity. “Don’t you think it’s strange? That someone like *you* could steal the spotlight? You were Quirkless before UA, right? That must have been hard… Did the world not beat you down for it? Or are you even more blessed than I thought?”

Canary tensed even more beside him. “N-No… they did…” his voice was so quiet – barely audible at all over the noise of the shopping mall.

Shigaraki let out a small laugh. “Isn’t that strange? You, me, the hero killer – we all have a similar goal. We all want *change* – but go about it in a different way. Ah, yes… change… I hadn’t thought about it like that before. What do I want to change about this world? What about you? Although, I guess you’ve already changed what you wanted to. The world already sees you. They don’t see me yet – not how I want it to.”

“I am nothing like you,” Canary growled, a strange confidence arising in him under the pressure of the encounter.

“Then what’s the difference? At least, between me and the Hero Killer?”

Canary gulped, and then turned his head to gaze down at his bright red shoes. Red like the blood of his past. “From what I’ve heard of y-you… you destroy for the fun of it. The Hero Killer… he had real motives. They were wrong – I don’t agree with them. But he had real convictions –”

Shigaraki’s grip grew tighter at the words. That was what *Stain* had told him.

But Canary continued, a little more panic riding in his voice now, “–h-he was inspired by All Might! He wanted to make a change, yes. He wanted to get rid of f-fake heroes – those who didn’t stay true to the word’s definition. B-But you just want to destroy…” His voice trailed off as he caught the look on Shigaraki’s face.

His grip grew tighter still.

“What about you then?” Shigaraki questioned menacingly, “What is *All Might* to you?”

“H-He is the symbol of peace,” Canary replied almost immediately. “I-I don’t know him well – but he is a hero. Heroes are my inspiration – I want to be like t-them – and stop people like *you.”*

He started to squirm now, as Shigaraki’s shaking hand pinched his skin.

But then – Shigaraki’s eyes widened, his hand loosening a little, ignoring Canary’s panicked breaths.

There, across the mall, was a little girl, holding an All Might action figure.

He darted his eyes around and he could see… *him* – he was everywhere. His obnoxious, smiling face baring his teeth down at them all. He wasn’t even truly there, yet, his presence was felt. Like some kind of omnipotent *God*.

But, he was only Human – they all were.

“That’s it…” Shigaraki grinned, “That’s the problem! I had convictions all along – I just couldn’t see them until now! Nothing’s changed… nothing at all. *All Might*. He’s the reason all these people can smile so thoughtlessly, whilst people are being murdered all across the world. *He’s* the reason this society exists as it is! He really is a pillar – holding it all up. Take it down… and the world will come crashing down with

it… take away the pillar – and show them all how fragile they really are."

He turned back to Canary. He was hyperventilating now. It was so funny – watching him panic. This is what they are all like, inside. Behind that stupid grin, there is a frightened child. Incredible, how such a small, pathetic little thing, could hold so much power.

Now, what to do with it?

He had been right earlier. Kill him now, and the heroes would catch him. It would be good, yes, but not in the long run.

No, he had *conviction* now. There was no need to throw that all away so soon. But that didn't mean he couldn't have a little fun…

"Hey… Midoriya?"

Shigaraki looked up.

There was another kid there. He recognised him – the purple haired hero that had been with Canary when he killed that Nomu… Brain Blank, the media had called him. He was just a child too? This was no good – he was powerful. Shigaraki saw him in the Sports Festival. Brain washing was a power to be feared.

"Are you…?" he continued unsurely, his eyes widening at the panic on his friend's expression.

"Whoops!" Shigaraki exclaimed, cutting Brain Blank off. He let go of Canary, who shrunk away from him, gasping for air and coughing pathetically. "I didn't realise you were here with friends!"

"Who are you?" Brain Blank demanded.

Shigaraki stood up, sliding his hands into the pocket of his hoody and smiling. He didn't answer the question. "We'll be speaking again soon, Canary."

He started to walk away. Brain Blank hurried to Canary's side, dropping his large shopping bag on the floor.

Shigaraki gripped the dismembered hand – *Father* – waiting for him in his pocket.

He turned back one last time, savouring the looks on their faces, "That's a promise."

Chapter End Notes

If you didn't read the starting notes you wouldn't understand why I put ***PAMPHLETS*** in bold. But I was very tempted to just put panflips instead for the hell of it.

However, I get too many comments about my poor spelling to risk putting that in there. I shall *avoid* the inevitability of someone not reading the notes and commenting, "Err, did you seriously just write *panflip?"*

This is definitely the most important factor of the chapter.

I also added a new tag

– If you miss the joke I'm disowning you.

And I also realise this chapter is very long – and could very easily be split into two. But *oh well here we are instead*.

ANYWAYS –

Thelovypop17 (who I just realised has this archive name and not just lovypop17 without the 'the' and I can't be bothered to go back and change every mention) is lovely because she always

brings me art and it makes me happy :D This time we have 'Theoridoki discovers more evidence for theory 135, "izuku and Hitoshi are brothers"' - probably the sons of Eraser Head and Present Mic XD

Coffeejelly expertly drew Midoriya singing Wings against Kaminari in the Sports Festival!

But I have also realised just how many chapters in a row where **Thelovypop17** has done Canary fanart! SO – I have decided to give her a worthy prize!

Innocence to the power of 3 is Pop's story! I wrote the summary and the story was brainstormed in the Discord server (linked in the end-endnotes and here)! It's a vigilante fic staring Midoriya, Shinso and Hatsume! It's only on the first chapter at the moment, but the next is coming very soon. It might have actually already updated as you're reading this! Pop got super, super excited about her first 25 kudos; can we make that 100 at the very least?!

Thank you all – see you in 5 days' time for the next upload!

The Calm Before The Storm

Chapter Notes

> Welcome to another super long chapter because... because yeah. Again, I guess I could have split this into two - but I only really wanted to do this *one* filler chapter, so here we are.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Whatever Shigaraki said or did, it must have really shaken Midoriya.

Shinso called the police as soon as the hooded figure had vanished into the unknowing crowd. The mall was temporarily closed, and the area searched extensively – but Shigaraki was nowhere to be found.

It was news to Shinso, when Jiro told him that this Shigaraki guy was basically the head of the League of Villains – the same one who had sent the Nomu to Hosu and to the USJ. He had a disintegration Quirk, one which immediately destroyed whatever he touched with all five fingers (or four, if the thumb didn't count, which was something he'd pointed out light heartedly to improve the mood – it hadn't worked). He'd had one of those deadly hands around Midoriya's throat.

So, now, he was quiet again – reaching for his neck almost on instinct whenever he came across a situation where he should be speaking.

He stayed like that for two days – not using sign or even messaging on his phone.

But then Tuesday came around.

"Well, it's ok if you don't want to talk today," Aozora smiled. Like, actually *smiled – nicely*. "There's no pressure."

Midoriya just blinked at her, seemingly surprised.

She turned back to her laptop like this was an extremely normal occurrence, typing away happily. "You'd take a day off if you weren't feeling physically up to it, right? Shouldn't it be the same… you know, mentally?"

She had said it like it was the most obvious thing in the world – which it was. But it wasn't like the rest of the world seemed to understand that.

Shinso had gone with Midoriya to the radio station that day, thinking it would be far more difficult to organise a way around Midoriya's problem.

"You can sit in the waiting room until your train home if you want," Aozora offered, not looking back from her laptop. If she had, she would have seen the tears welling up in Midoriya's eyes. "You can even sit with Present Mic in the studio, hey – you can go in too, Raven."

Shinso didn't have time to reply before Present Mic finished up in the studio – but didn't throw the door open in his usual, dramatic fashion. Instead, he was slow and quiet, giving Midoriya a wide smile. "Hello there, little listener!" he said softly. "How's everyone's favourite canary?"

There was a determined tweet from the bird concealed amongst Midoriya's curls.

Midoriya let out a laugh, "She's fine."

Not a single person or creature in that room was immune from that smile of Midoriya's, as they quickly followed suit.

Thanks to the radio show – Midoriya's light hadn't quite been snuffed out yet.

"Then let's get to the last show before your summer camp!" Present Mic cried, his usual energetic self, returning in full force.

"Are you sure, Canary?" Aozora questioned, turning away form the blue light of her laptop for a moment, as she gazed concerningly at her little radio star.

He didn't waver for a single second as he nodded determinedly at her – like a switch had been flipped in his brain.

Aozora gave Shinso a look as Midoriya scurried after Present Mic into the studio. She didn't say anything out loud – that expression was enough.

You take care of him.

Shinso nodded and followed Midoriya inside, closing the door behind him.

Midoriya was sitting in his chair already – headphones on – and was currently spinning it around in circles, watching Siren soar in a similar pattern over his head.

Shinso was handed a pair of headphones for himself from Present Mic. He smiled at his teacher and sat down beside Midoriya contently.

Before that last show began though, Present Mic gave Midoriya a look similar to Aozora's. "You don't have to talk if you don't want to," he reassured him.

Midoriya did hesitate a little that time, but he shook his head, as if dispelling any thoughts which plagued him, and nodded once more.

Present Mic smiled softly, "Remember," he continued, putting on his own headphones, "You should never feel pressurised to talk or sing at any time – even as a hero. You could *probably* have gotten away with being a hero without a Quirk anyway!"

Exactly twenty-seven seconds of radio silence passed between the end of the song and the start of Canary's Hour that day. Shinso must have listened to it a thousand times – counting the moments, as he recalled him and Present Mic desperately trying to get Midoriya to stop crying before they could go on air.

There was a good reason behind why he'd listened to it so many times.

Class 1-B stood in a huddle by their bus. Their things had been loaded into the luggage hold, and all twenty of them were eagerly discussing the week to come.

1-A was arriving too – slowly but surely.

Monoma had made sure to point out their inefficiency. Kendo had made sure to smack him around the head for it. You'd think he'd learn, by this point. Apparently not.

"Do you think there'll be any signal at the camp?" questioned Setsuna, pouting at the screen of her phone as she made the most of the

opportunity, where they *definitely* had signal.

“I don’t think you should count on it,” Kendo informed her.

She sighed and continued to tap away. “I haven’t finished downloading everything I wanted to yet.”

“What’ve you got already?” interjected Honenuki.

“A couple of TV shows… just stuff I haven’t caught up on yet. Oh, and a few recordings of Canary’s Hour.”

“Oh, me too! I’ve got the audio files of his singing!” exclaimed Kinoko excitably.

“You’re a bit of a fan, aren’t you?” Kendo smiled.

At the beginning of the year, Kinoko had been a rather shy girl. In fact, one of the first times Kendo had ever really spoken to her had been during a conversation about Canary. She just seemed to really relate to him – and her apparent growth in confidence over the last few months was reminiscent to Canary’s.

“I think he’s great!” Kinoko grinned. “And Yui thinks so too!”

Yui just nodded. She wasn’t very talkative – not mute, at least, Kendo didn’t think so – and she was the class president, so she would have been told if one of her classmates had a problem like that. She was just a little shy, like Kinoko was. In fact, her and Kinoko had become good friends, bonding over talk of Canary’s Hour. Well, Kinoko did most of the talking – enthusing over it all whilst Yui just listened attentively, smiling. Now, Yui was showing her phone to Kinoko. Glancing over, Kendo could see the various saved radio segments and song covers of Canary’s.

That was when their bus arrived.

Kendo had to hit Monoma around the head again in an attempt to shut him up – after he started making fun of so many of class 1-A failing the exams and having to take extra classes. It was very hypocritical of him, since he had failed too…

After getting everyone to line up in front of their bus, Kendo was about to drag Monoma aboard, encouraging the rest of 1-B to follow.

“Attention class,” the gruff voice of Mr Vlad called out.

Kendo hesitated, nearly dropping Monoma down the stairs as he came to.

Their teacher was standing beside the slumped form of Mr Aizawa. Wow, Kendo was glad she was in 1-B instead of 1-A. Mr Aizawa had already expelled two students *and* their class had been involved in a villain attack! Well, only one of those students had been expelled because they weren't performing up to standard. Yaoyorozu had told her a bit about the other boy whilst they were on their internship together. She sounded pretty relieved that he'd been kicked out, and Kendo was too.

"I hope you all realise that this isn't some kind of summer vacation," Mr Aizawa begun, addressing both classes as his weary eyes drifted over them. "You will be pushed to your limits, in hope that next time, it will be harder to reach them."

"It going to be tough," Mr Vlad continued, "And as Mr Aizawa said, when you come out the other side, all of you will be tougher too."

"We're going to be working towards gaining your provisional hero licences at this camp. Usually, this is not something students earn until their second year, but you lot are different," explained Mr Aizawa, pulling at the scarf around his neck. "From the attention in the media to incidences occurring in your internships, as well as the attack on the USJ, it is important that you have the ability to use your Quirks legally against villains as quickly as possible. But, to get this licence so early, you will need to not just give it your all, but go beyond – plus ultra, and all that."

"And remember," said Mr Vlad, giving Monoma a look, "you're outside of the Sports Festival now – so you don't need to view each other as rivals at the current moment. It is more beneficial for all of you to work together to achieve greatness… for now."

Kendo sighed. Even Mr Vlad was rather… jingoistic – about their class.

Even Mr Aizawa seemed to pick up on that, because Kendo was sure she saw him roll his eyes. "Speaking of classes," he said, changing the subject somewhat, "with twenty students in class 1-B and only eighteen in 1-A, I think it's safe to say we should just transfer them straight to my class?"

Kendo frowned – a lot of her fellow hero course students did. Mr Aizawa was obviously talking to just Mr Vlad, but that didn't make

them any less confused and curious.

“It wouldn’t be hard for me to manage an extra student or two,” Mr Vlad contradicted.

“The classrooms only hold twenty kids.”

“Well, yes – but that doesn’t mean they have to be in class A… Besides, wouldn’t it be more beneficial if you put them on class B’s bus? There’s enough space for twenty-five there. I thought you didn’t want to include them in your little training exercise?”

Mr Aizawa really sighed this time. “I suppose not. Fine – do that then.”

He suddenly ducked his head, and a little green ball whizzed past like a rocket, stopping in mid air right before the face of that tall kid in class 1-A – the one that could talk to animals. Kendo felt bad for not quite remembering his name.

That was when she realised that it wasn’t a ball – but a tiny, green *bird*.

A canary, to be exact.

Kendo teared her eyes away from the intruder, only to settle them on the two people now standing in between Mr Vlad and Mr Aizawa.

“Everyone,” Mr Aizawa continued, indicating towards them, “meet Shinso and Midoriya.

“Canary, and Brain Blank.”

If Midoriya thought he would be able to keep Siren at home whilst he went to the hero course’s summer camp, he would be wrong – very wrong. Siren did whatever she wanted and if her Human was going to be gone for a week, then she would be coming with him – no questions asked. And Midoriya was a little scared to be firm with the tiny creature after she almost pecked out that Nomu’s eyes.

Now, she was sitting in Koda’s hands smugly, as his eyes flicked between her and Midoriya and Shinso in bewilderment. They had

arrived rather suddenly. It wasn't *Midoriya's* fault they were late. Shinso was the one who almost forgot his PE kit, and left Midoriya standing and waiting by the crossroads before UA for ten minutes longer than usual before he finally arrived.

"They are applying to be transferred to the hero course by the start of next semester," Mr Aizawa continued.

Midoriya smiled feebly at the hero course as most of them stared with star struck eyes. Not all of them though – his *aria* friends smirked at the others' excitement. Then there was… Kacchan. Midoriya tried to avert his gaze – those piercing red eyes drilled into his skull with an unspoken threat. A fear bubbled in his chest – a feeling of dread that once plagued him everyday during middle school. It had been missing for a while – but with its return, he could already feel that wall between his mouth and his mind building itself up again. Why? – he was ok during the Sports Festival! He talk to him – shouted – screamed – even *sang*. And now we're back to ground zero.

"Ok – you all have ten minutes to finish loading your things onto the bus – and then we'll get going," Mr Aizawa finished unceremoniously, and then just wandered off towards class A's bus and got on board – immediately slamming his face into the dashboard and falling asleep.

Midoriya was remotely impressed.

Uraraka skipped forward to them, with Jiro in tow. "I'm so glad you're here!" she exclaimed, grinning brightly at Midoriya.

"Not you though," Jiro added, pointing at Shinso.

Shinso just laughed.

"Hey, Canary," Uraraka continued. She was holding something behind her back, "I got you something from the mall the other day – but after everything that happened – I never got around to giving it to you so…"

[*You didn't have to do that!*] Midoriya signed and Shinso translated.

"You payed for my food at the café," she insisted, waving off the comment. "Besides, it wasn't much – *ta-dah!"*

Thrust into Midoriya's arms, was a pocket sized, black notebook titled *Death Note*.

“You know, the anime?” she laughed. “I never watched it – but I thought you could put all your dangerous songs in there or something!”

“It might be a good idea to write them down – or have you already done that?” Jiro questioned.

Midoriya opened his mouth to reply, but was quickly interrupted –

“Midoriya, Shinso!” exclaimed the teacher for class 1-B – Vlad King. “You will be boarding class B’s bus on the way to the camp – so make sure to load your luggage here instead of on class A’s vehicle.”

They all blinked at him, “Aren’t we transferring to class A though?” Shinso voiced. “There’s two spaces free in their class – but no spaces in yours.”

Vlad King hesitated for a moment, as if thinking for a reasonable excuse. “You know a good majority of class A already. Its only an hour’s journey – but you could use it to familiarise yourself with class B!”

Siren flew back to Midoriya as he narrowed his eyes at class B’s teacher. He turned to Shinso, gingerly putting his new book down by his feet to sign, [*I feel sorry for class A*]

He frowned, “Why?”

[*Did you hear what Tired was saying to King just before we arrived?*]

“No, because I don’t have super hearing and *we hadn’t arrived yet.*”

[*We weren’t that far away*]

“Yeah, scratch that stuff about your music being too loud. Just *let* it damage your hearing – that’s scary.”

[*It’s not!*]

“These one-sided conversations are too difficult to comprehend,” Todoroki sighed as he walked up to them too.

“Puffin, *everything* confuses you,” Uraraka pointed out.

He just shrugged.

“You two should follow Mr Vlad King’s instructions and put your

belongings on their bus!" Iida instructed, cutting into their conversation with his usual, hand chopping thing.

"Oh, hey – is that a guitar case I see?" Jiro grinned excitably as she noticed the slightly scorched case. It was harder to see the burnt patches because it was black in colour, but they were still there.

Midoriya picked it up and hugged it close to his body, smiling nervously and nodding.

"Awesome – you have to let me have a go on it at some point," said Jiro. "If I knew you were bringing an instrument, I would have too."

"Y-You play?" Midoriya whispered to her.

She smiled at his voice, "Yeah – learnt pretty much anything I could get my hands on."

"M-Me too!"

Someone tapped him on the shoulder.

Midoriya squealed and jumped backwards a couple of metres in surprise.

A girl with vibrant ginger hair in a high ponytail blinked at him, "Sorry!" she apologised, "I didn't mean to scare you." She cleared her throat before introducing herself, "I'm Itsuka Kendo – the class representative of 1-B."

"Hitoshi Shinso," Shinso said, before pointing to Midoriya with his thumb, "Izuku Midoriya."

Midoriya just waved weakly.

"Well, do you want me to help you with your bags?" Kendo offered.

"It's ok," Shinso replied, and Midoriya nodded alongside him. "We'll see you guys at camp," he said to the others.

"See you then, don't replace us while you're gone," Jiro replied.

"I wouldn't *dream* of it," smirked Shinso as he walked away.

Midoriya picked up his guitar case and notebook once more, readjusted the strap of his duffle bag around his shoulder, and scurried after Shinso as quickly as he could – sticking to his side like

glue.

Class 1-B was already on their bus when Kendo stepped in ahead of them, a kind smile on her face. “Guys!” she called out, “Midoriya and Shinso will be coming with us to camp! Say hello!”

Midoriya flinched at the chorus of *hellos*, fumbling and almost dropping his new Bluetooth headphones, already connected to his phone. Gosh – he really was jumpy today, wasn’t he?

He stayed close to Shinso as he wandered down the aisle of the bus, aiming for the spare seats right at the back.

The members of class 1-B gaped and stared as he hurried past. A couple of them had a set of two seats to themselves – meaning that two of the five seats at the very back of the bus were occupied. Shinso slid in next to the window, whilst Midoriya was eager to sit down, right next to him.

He sighed in relief, looking forward to an hour to himself – escaping from all the *people* and the *talking*. But…

After a slight hesitation, a rather short girl, who had been sitting a couple of seats over from him, slid over one, a wobbly smile on her face as she perched next to him.

“H-Hi!” she said, fiddling with her hair a little. Her fringe was rather long – completely covering her eyes. Through gaps in the thick hair though, Midoriya could almost see the stars in her eyes as she gazed up at him.

Midoriya blinked at her for a second, before waving back.

Shinso leant forwards, “Aren’t you the girl who had Midoriya’s radio key card before the Sports Festival?”

Midoriya almost forgot about that.

With a nod, she confirmed Shinso’s suspicions. “Sorry,” she apologised. “I was just really curious – I’ve listened to all your shows!”

After a slight hesitation, Midoriya ended up replying in sign [*Thank you*]

“He says thank you,” Shinso translated almost immediately.

“Oh, thank *you*. Do you –”

“Midoriya is mute,” Shinso snapped. He’d had to explain that a lot – Midoriya worried it was starting to get on his nerves.

“I-I know!” she stammered, “I was going to ask if you wanted to go by Canary or Midoriya?”

He smiled and exaggerated his shrug, showing that he didn’t really mind.

“Oh – and I’m Kinoko Komori!” she grinned, “And this is my friend, Yui Kodai!”

She pointed at the girl on her left, who mimicked Midoriya’s wave as the bus roared into life.

“Hey, Midoriya?” Shinso suddenly interrupted. He had been gazing out the window at the lingering members of class 1-A. “What were you trying to tell me earlier?”

It took a moment for him to remember, “Oh –” [*King mentioned something about Tired doing an exercise with class A that he didn’t want us included in*]

“Really?” frowned Shinso.

[*If I had to give it a guess, I’d say he’s going to make them walk…*]

Shinso turned back to the window, Uraraka was waving up at them. He waved back, “Ha, they have no clue – good luck, you poor, oblivious souls.”

Moments later, Jiro gave a mock salute from the window, to which Shinso dutifully replied to as their coach rolled out of UA grounds, leaving class 1-A behind them.

Komori was officially *freaking out*.

She was sitting right next to Canary.

She was *listening to his radio – with* Yui – *whilst* sitting next to him!

And he had *no idea*. In fact, he was listening to his own music, tapping

along to the beat on his knees as he stared absentmindedly out the window that Raven was leaning against, fast asleep even as the bus rolled through potholes or around sharp bends.

And *oh my gosh,* Siren's there too! Swaying from side to side, resting her little head against Canary's, likely listening to his music too.

Ahhhhh!

She wondered if he liked mushrooms.

Shiitake! Komori loved shiitake – *Lentinula edodes*. Oh, what about *Enokitake?* She wondered if he'd ever tried *Hericium erinaceus?*

No, he probably wasn't as interested in mushrooms as Komori was.

She liked mushrooms because her Quirk was to do with mushrooms! And Canary liked music because he needed it for *his* Quirk. But he probably would have liked music anyway. He said so on the radio; that he'd learnt loads of instruments before he even knew he had a Quirk at all! Komori couldn't imagine not having her Quirk – such a big part of her, completely missing.

Oh gosh, she had so many questions for him! But she didn't want to ask… he was busy – deep in thought as he played the same part of the same song over and over again. And he also wasn't talking… That didn't make sense to her. Well, she understood the muteness part. Yui wasn't *officially* mute – she just didn't talk that much. But it was a similar concept anyway. But he talked on the radio all the time – and sang so beautifully during the Sports Festival! Then there was that rumour – going around school, that Canary had been confronted by a villain at the mall last Sunday. Apparently, he'd gone quiet after it, like it had scared him so much that it set him back on his recovery from his selective muteness. Komori hoped she could help, even in the slightest. That's what heroes – and friends – do, after all. Oh, how Komori would *love* to be his friend!

But it was about half an hour into their journey that anyone at all dared speak to the newcomers.

"Hey! Canary!" exclaimed Tetsutetsu from over his chair a couple of rows down.

Canary didn't look up at first. It took Raven elbowing him to achieve that. His music was probably rather loud.

“Which class is better, A or B?!”

Canary blinked at him for a moment, before nervously glancing around the bus at the rest of their curious faces, including Komori’s. Eventually, he just opted for another, exaggerated shrug.

“Well, it won’t take long for you to come to the correct conclusion!” Tetsutetsu announced confidently.

Raven sighed exasperatingly, “Look, no offense, but all we know about you lot is that you seem to hate class A. We’ve never really met any of you and all our friends are in the other class. Right now, that’s who we prefer.”

Komori blinked at him through her bangs. He was a little blunt, but painstakingly right. All class B had really done so far was focus on their grades and get angry at class A, well, the *louder* members of their group did anyway.

“So, wait,” Setsuna interjected after a few minutes of painful silence, “are all the members of the original aria in class A?”

Midoriya just pointed at Shinso.

“Wait, you’re Raven, right?” she concluded.

He nodded – neither of them were very talkative, which was strange, considering *both* of them had been on the radio on numerous occasions.

“*Wait…*” Setsuna said for the third time. “You’re Raven *and* Brain Blank?”

“Brain Blank?” repeated Monoma. Now he was leaning over the back of his seat to glare down at Shinso with that *look* of his. “Ah, yes – Mr Aizawa said that earlier. So, it was the two of you who took down the Hero Killer then?”

“What of it?” Raven spat at him after a moment’s thought, glancing at Canary, who had said nothing.

“Well, not only was the public lead to believe that Brain Blank was a more unknown hero, rather than another UA student, but you let Canary take most of the credit, and hid the fact that Raven, Brain Blank and *you* were all one in the same person,” Monoma explained slyly.

Canary grew a little red as he sank further back into his seat.

“That’s because I don’t *want* to be well-known,” Raven snapped. “My Quirk is less effective if everyone knows what it is. Besides – I only turned up at the end. Canary did most of the work.”

“Oh yeah?” said Tsuburaba, who had been sitting next to Monoma, and now leaning over the back of his seat too. “What songs did you use against him? That’s how your Quirk works, right? You use songs and that gives you different powers and stuff?”

“Yeah, come on – give us some details!” grinned Setsuna.

Komori looked back and forth between her classmates and Canary. They just seemed generally excited to talk to him. Canary appeared to feel exactly the opposite.

Raven had noticed it too. He opened his mouth to protest against bugging him, but Komori beat him to it.

“Leave him alone!” she exclaimed. Only afterwards did she realise that had been a little rude, but Kendo quickly came to her rescue.

“Yeah, come on guys, it’s obvious he doesn’t want to talk about it, so there’s no need to push for answers. We want to make Midoriya and Shinso feel welcome – not push them away,” she sighed, sinking back into her chair as she finished her proclamation. She was like everyone’s big sister – Komori sometimes pictured poor Kendo holding onto a bunch of harnessed little toddlers, running around and screaming – whilst the rest sat on the floor and complained loudly, or just lay motionless with questionably still bodies.

Komori saw how Canary relaxed a little, sitting a little more upright in his seat as the others turned away respectfully – expect Monoma, who had to be hit around the head by Kendo from across the gangway to achieve that.

A few seconds past – and Siren hopped onto her shoulder.

Komori could have *screamed* in delight!

Mission successful.

Class 1-B was a little overwhelming for Midoriya, but that was to be expected.

When arriving at the summer camp – after a brief internal freak out that they'd just met *Tiger and Ragdoll from the Wild, Wild Pussycats!* – Midoriya and Shinso unloaded their luggage into the 1-A boys' sleeping area, and then made their way back outside.

They had a few hours to kill before food was served apparently, which mainly involved tours around the facilities and a brief description of what they'd be doing over the next few days. But the vague term of *training*, still didn't sit right with Midoriya. It felt rather ominous – what training would they be doing, *exactly?*

But he ended up finding himself spending more time, alongside Shinso, with that girl from the bus that Shinso kept calling Fringe 2.0 in sign language. Her real name was Komori – and since it turns out she had a *super* interesting Quirk to do with spawning any and all types of fungi (the possibilities that kind of power could grant! He went on a tangent for far too long on it, muttering endlessly and poor Komori looked like she was about to pass out after hearing his voice for the first time in person), Midoriya now called her *Mushroom* as a sign name instead.

Kodai was nice too. She could change the size of any non-living thing she wanted – which was also *super* cool. She didn't talk that much, but it was something Midoriya could appreciate. She wasn't mute, like him – she didn't actually struggle to get the words out of her mouth – she just didn't, really. But Midoriya was so used to having to communicate in methods other than words, or without sign for the many who couldn't translate it, that they got by quite well anyway.

After dinner, the four of them were sitting by the trees out of the front of the lodge, when Siren let out a high-pitched squeak – not a scared, warning one – but a, someone's coming, kind of thing.

They turned around, and from the depths of the woodland – trudged class A.

Shinso let out a pitiful laugh, "Had fun, did you?"

Uraraka appeared beside them, only to fall face first into the ground groaning, "I think I'm gonna be sick…"

"Are you ok?" questioned Komori, deep concern in her voice as the rest of class A appeared.

Jiro was next. She looked down at Shinso, panting from the effort of making it there.

“We replaced you,” Shinso announced, “These are our new best friends.”

Jiro seemingly didn’t have the energy to come up with a suitable come back, “Screw you,” she decided on. “Not you two,” she added after a moment’s thought, “You seem nice – sorry – I’m too tired to deal with this.”

Uraraka moaned in agreement as Jiro helped her off the ground.

“Midoriya successfully predicted this would happen,” Shinso added as he stood up too, along with everyone else.

“Of course, he did,” she sighed.

“Alright class, fall in,” Mr Aizawa announced, and the poor, exhausted souls of class 1-A dragged their feet over into the centre of the clearing before their teacher, and the two remaining members of the Wild, Wild Pussycats that Midoriya had yet to meet – Mandalay and Pixie Bob. Actually, there was a third stranger there – a little boy with a red cap on.

Midoriya vaguely listened as Pixie Bob praised some of them for their efforts – and as Mandalay apologised for expecting them to take far less time.

“You have time to bath and eat after you’ve unloaded your things from the bus. The *real* training begins tomorrow,” Mr Aizawa announced as Midoriya, Shinso and the two 1-B girls approached curiously.

Mr Aizawa caught a glance of the four of them from the corner of his eye. “I thought the rest of class B were already in the baths?”

“We really couldn’t be bothered,” Shinso replied. The other three, including Midoriya, just nodded.

Mr Aizawa nodded, “Right – you lot – get going. You’ve got a long week ahead of you…”

Midoriya didn't sleep until late that night. It was a stupid reason, really.

His bed was positioned in the far corner. Shinso was next to him, and he had Todoroki and Iida opposite.

Kacchan was as far away as he could possibly be.

But all night, the hairs on the back of Midoriya's neck stood upright, thinking about the old friend on the other side of the room. He'd yet to talk to him since the Sports Festival – and he was quite certain that he couldn't, even if he *tried*. So… now what?

He drifted off into an uneasy sleep, with Siren nestled in his curls – her feathers tickling his scalp. It was more comforting than his thoughts.

The sun hadn't risen when Mr Aizawa threw the door open, sending a wave of chilly air across them.

They were told to get their PE uniforms on and meet Mr Aizawa at their training grounds – somewhere that Midoriya and Shinso had to lead everyone to, since they'd been shown around the day before, whilst they trekked through the 'Beasts' Forest'.

They were half awake – barely any had managed to brush their hair; a few had just thrown their PE jacket over the top of their top. Midoriya noticed that *two* of them had their shoes on the wrong way around (he would say names if he could actually remember what all of them were called).

The only one who was *really* ready for the day was Siren, who was singing peacefully, hovering around Midoriya and the others gleefully.

"Good morning, class," Mr Aizawa began.

[*How is he so awake despite the fact that he sleeps at every given opportunity?*] Midoriya signed lazily as he yawned amongst a chorus of others.

[*It's an inspiration*] Shinso replied, who actually didn't look much more tired than usual – but the lack of gel in his hair was *weird as hell* – like when he saw Present Mic with his hair done up for the first time, except this felt *even weirder*.

He caught back onto Mr Aizawa's little introductory speech when he

mentioned earning their provisional licences. “Yes, you too, Midoriya, Shinso,” their new teacher nodded. Wait, did this mean they were officially in the hero course now?

Shinso must have read his mind or something, because he immediately followed those thoughts by saying, “I thought you said we weren’t in your class yet.”

Mr Aizawa smirked, “We’ll see.”

Yeah, because that was a definite answer.

“Bakugo, think fast,” said Mr Aizawa, tossing a soft ball in Kacchan’s direction. Midoriya didn’t even dare look at him.

He glanced up at Shinso instead as he signed, [*It’s like the tests Tired put us through. Do you think class A had to do them too?*]

Kacchan had just launched the soft ball over the trees, screaming *go to hell* as he did so. Midoriya flinched at it before replying to Shinso with shaking hands, [*That was how the first member of class A was expelled, I believe*]

“Are you ok?” Shinso whispered to him. That caught the attention of Jiro, attentive as always.

Midoriya didn’t reply.

“–That’s why we’re now going to focus on improving your powers,” Mr Aizawa concluded from their little demonstration.

Midoriya shook his head and tried to regain focus. He could deal with his problems with Kacchan later. Right now, he needed to set his mind on one thing, and one thing only – becoming a hero.

“This’ll be so hard you’ll feel like you’re dying,” Mr Aizawa grinned. “Let’s hope you all survive.”

…Ok, *what?!*

Midoriya slammed his head on the table, almost knocking the half-done potatoes off the counter.

“Midoriya!” Iida snapped, “I’ve spent far too long doing those to risk contamination on the dirty ground!”

Midoriya opened his eyes again, focusing on the few, measly potatoes that hadn’t been whittled out of existence from Iida’s poor pealing method.

All of a sudden, there was another thud. Midoriya stood upright to see Shinso next to him – who had also resorted to slamming his head on the counter.

“I hate that stupid scarf,” he groaned. “It defies all laws of physics.”

Whilst the others had been set to the *torture* of endless Quirk training, Shinso had been dragged off by Mr Aizawa for training with his support item. At least *he* didn’t have to stand on a cliff edge with Kouda, screaming for the entirety of the day. Midoriya was surprised he still had the *physical* capability to talk at all – now all those vocal exercises were done for the day… But he did have Present Mic’s throat lozenges. Kouda and Midoriya were pretty much hailing them as some kind of gift from God – that’s how much of a saviour they were.

Midoriya just picked up one of Iida’s potatoes and flicked it at Shinso’s head. A couple of seconds passed before he said, “Ouch.”

He laughed, whilst Siren reappeared and landed before Shinso’s eyes, tweeting at him and pecking at his forehead.

“Ok, ok!” Shinso exclaimed, standing upright again. “I get the picture, Siren.”

“Hey! No animals in the workspace!” Iida protested as he added another couple of potatoes to the collection, frowning at the slight decrease in number.

“Did you know potatoes are highly poisonous when raw?” Midoriya piped up, “They’re a member of the deadly nightshade family.”

“Trust you to know that,” interjected Todoroki as he wandered past, holding a flame in his hand to slight the various fires around the outdoor kitchen.

Shinso just blinked at him for a moment, before reaching back to the dwindling number, “Give me those potatoes.”

“*No!”* Midoriya protested, pulling him away.

Jiro just laughed from a distance. “Do it! I dare you!”

“I have been dared,” Shinso proclaimed, still reaching out for the raw vegetables.

“That does *not* mean it is a good idea!” Iida exclaimed, who was becoming rather protective at this point.

“I agree!” added Uraraka from across the counter, by Todoroki, “Canary, film it!”

“You know, maybe this is what Present Mic meant about corrupting you,” Shinso grinned as he stopped trying to massacre Iida’s precious potatoes.

“I thought you said he came like that?!” Jiro called back.

“Well, we’re not a very good influence!”

“So, wait – who’s who?”

Midoriya looked to Komori, who had just wandered over with a plate of chopped mushrooms to add to their curry.

“You’re talking about the aria, right?” Shinso confirmed.

She nodded as she poured in the mushrooms.

“Well, you know about me and Midoriya,” he continued. “This is Crane,” he pointed to Iida, who was now being shown by one of the class B boys how to properly peal the potatoes. “That’s Puffin,” Todoroki was giving some of his fire to Uraraka, “Dove’s the one beside him – and by the next fire pit over, with the purple hair, that’s Owl.”

“Huh,” Komori smiled, “You’re all so different to what I expected!”

“W-Would you like to sit with us when the curry’s finished?” Midoriya offered.

Komori positively *beamed*, “Yeah, ok! We’ve just got the potatoes to do anyway.”

“Maybe we should lend a hand,” Shinso suggested, grimacing at Iida. “Or else we’ll *never* get this done.”

Midoriya laughed, following Shinso and Komori over to the potato

peeling station. But he hesitated, suddenly catching a glimpse of that little boy with the red hat – Kouta, that was his name. He stormed off into a little footpath, which disappeared into the forest, winding past the trees and supposedly leading up into one of the looking mountains.

“Hey, Midoriya – got any potato peeling songs?” Shinso yelled, making everyone stop what they were doing to smirk in his direction.

“No!” he blushed furiously.

“Then let’s write one,” Shinso grinned, teasing him on purpose.

“You *know* it doesn’t work like that!”

Midoriya set by the fire, picking at the grass beneath him.

The Wild, Wild Pussycats seemed to be determined to cram as much activity into one day as humanly possible. Now, before they all collapsed into their beds, they had been instructed to work as a team to create a large bonfire – without the use of Quirks.

This had resulted in many arguments – absolute frustration, a hoard of tired teenagers almost setting themselves on fire and, *finally*, one, overly massive bonfire to sit around, roasting marshmallows and (with credit to Komori) the occasional mushroom.

Midoriya had spent the last two minutes burning his marshmallow to nothing but charcoal. Shinso had been doing that too, but he actually *ate* his.

The truth was, Midoriya was deep in thought.

During dinner, he’d decided to grab the last plate of curry from the pot, and take the serving up to the little boy, who he had found hiding away up on the mountain side. He hadn’t been pleased to see him.

Kouta seemed to *despise* Midoriya with a passion that he’d only seen in the eyes of villains, or perhaps Kacchan. He must have heard him on the radio or from the Sports Festival at some point, because Kouta yelled at him about caring about *getting stronger* or *showing off*. Heroes fighting villains and killing each other because of it. He hated it –

hated it all – their entire superhuman society – Quirks – *everything*.

It had taken Midoriya a while to make the connection, but now, as he sat incinerating his marshmallow, he remembered.

Mandalay, one of the Wild, Wild Pussycats – her cousin had been one of a hero duo called Water Hose. They had been killed in the line of duty, so to speak – by a manic villain who was never caught. Kouta must have been their son.

And this hatred – this was the result of their sudden departure.

Midoriya wanted to do something about it – he wanted to help. But… he just didn't know *how*.

Kouta was still up on the mountain side right now. He had refused to come down – like he wanted to distance himself from the hero course students. But Midoriya had a week to gain his trust. No one reached out to Midoriya before UA – Midoriya wanted to be the person who made the difference to Kouta. He hated to see him revel in such misery, especially at such a young age.

"That's not a marshmallow anymore."

Midoriya looked up to see Todoroki staring down at him, holding a newly opened packet in his arms and a steaming mushroom on the end of his stick.

"No," Midoriya agreed, before knocking it off into the fire, and watching the remaining sugar sizzle and pop in the heat, melting over the logs in a sticky, black mess.

"You look deep in thought," Todoroki continued, sitting down beside him and sticking a new marshmallow in Midoriya's hand.

He nodded, putting the plush pink sweet into the flames.

"What of?"

He hesitated, unsure of whether to reveal Kouta's situation to more people than necessary – it was rather private. Actually, thinking of which – "Todoroki –"

"You can call me Puffin if you want," he said with a slight smile, "It confuses people who don't understand. I find it funny."

If Todoroki found it funny, then Midoriya would most *certainly* follow

up on that. “O-Ok. Well then, *Puffin* – I was just…” he looked up at the others around the fire.

Shinso was busy sandwiching a melted marshmallow between two flat mushrooms with a sadistic grin on his face as Jiro and Uraraka looked on in repulsion. Iida was patrolling the edge of the fire, preventing anyone from coming too close. But just out of sight, Tetsutetsu was sticking his hand in it, letting his metal Quirk allow it to glow hot and white, and then plunging it into the giant marshmallow that Kodai had made. No one payed attention to Todoroki and Midoriya.

“…I was thinking back to the Sports Festival,” Midoriya continued. “About… w-well, you just seemed so… so *sad* back then, before I sang that song to you. Then, that little boy – Kouta – he seems sad too – angry, even. I want to help but I-I don’t know… *how*.”

“And you’re wondering what you did for me?” Todoroki finished.

Midoriya wasn’t actually sure where his train of thought had been taking him, but that seemed like a logical destination. He nodded.

But a silence fell between them. They both watched Midoriya’s new marshmallow droop off the stick, and the sugar grow molten in the flames.

Todoroki drew in a shaking breath, “What do you know about… Quirk marriages?”

Who would have thought class A and class B could unite over a giant freaking *marshmallow?*

The lack of Monoma, who was stuck in remedial lessons with Mr Aizawa and the other five from class A, probably helped. And a few had already gone to sleep, including Bakugo.

Anyway – Tetsutetsu was now covered from head to toe in sticky marshmallow gunk, and Kendo, Iida and Yaoyorozu were desperately trying to convince him *not* to walk right into the bonfire to burn it all off. Jiro was just disappointed she didn’t have any popcorn.

But then her eyes caught a glimpse of Todoroki and Canary. They

were sitting away from everyone else – just burning whatever they could get their hands on.

She didn't know where Siren was – which was never a good sign, but she decided that *Canary* should be keeping an eye on the little demon and thus, it wasn't her problem.

Maybe that would be a good thing to bring up to Canary though. So, Jiro decided to leave the chaos of her side of the bonfire, and hurry over to the other two.

"Hey, have you seen Siren?" she started, sitting down on the grass next to Midoriya.

He shook his head glumly.

"Oh… err, should we go looking for her or something?"

"She'll be fine," Midoriya replied without a second thought.

Silence fell between the three of them. Wow, the fire really was mesmerising, wasn't it?

But then, Midoriya said, "Did you know that the birds, Great Tits, have been known to eat bat brains?"

Todoroki and Jiro stared at him.

"Didn't Siren peck that Nomu's eye out?" Todoroki recalled.

They fell quiet again.

"Well, I'm now fearful for my life," Jiro announced as the silence was interrupted by a loud cheer from the rest of the group.

They were now praising a second giant marshmallow, that Setsuna (whose Quirk let her detach numerous body parts and control them) had stuck her eyes on. Jiro supposed her announcement could apply to the marshmallow *and* to Siren.

But then, as a satanic chant began, Jiro had an idea.

"Hey, Canary – didn't you bring your guitar with you?" she remembered.

He wavered before giving her a nervous nod.

“Marshmallow song?” Todoroki suggested.

Canary rolled his eyes. “Did you want me to go and get it, Jiro – Owl?”

Jiro smiled at the nickname, “Sure – songs around the campfire could be fun.”

“I-I don’t know if I will *sing*…” he mumbled as he got to his feet. “But I’m ok to at least play it…”

“Awesome,” she smiled, and she got up herself, leaving Todoroki to sacrifice the remaining marshmallows, in hopes that a *third* giant wasn’t formed.

Jiro walked right in on a debate on whether Kodai held the secret to making infinite amounts of food for Yaoyorozu, and thus infinite creations – which sounded almost as terrifying as her thoughts of whatever Siren could be up to.

“Hey, Uraraka?” Jiro started.

“Uh huh?” she replied, too scared to tear her eyes away from the giant marshmallow, which now also had Setsuna’s mouth.

“I got Canary to go get his guitar,” Jiro grinned.

That got her to look away, “Wait, really?!”

“Want to help me try and convince him to sing something?”

“*Definitely*.”

By the time they’d returned to Todoroki, Canary hurried back into view, guitar case under one arm, and the instrument in the other.

“What *happened* to it?” Jiro questioned, gaping at the ruined wood.

“I set it on fire,” Canary explained simply.

“Why would you sing a song that sets fire to something whilst holding a wooden instrument?” questioned Todoroki curiously.

“Because I didn’t know it would set it on fire,” laughed Canary sheepishly as he began to tune it.

Jiro blinked as she processed the information, “Wait, your first song

set you on *fire?"*

"Err…" Canary winced, "Not exactly…"

"Then what was it?" Uraraka pressed, leaning forward – the light of the fire reflecting in her wide eyes.

"Well…" Canary continued, finally satisfied with the sound of his instrument, "I kind of… set fire to the rain?"

Jiro and Uraraka both spluttered as they failed to control their laughter.

"Oh my God –," Jiro gaped, "That must have been *terrifying!"*

"It really was," Canary laughed too.

"What's more terrifying than the Setsuna marshmallow?" questioned Shinso as he waltzed into view, his hands buried in the pockets of his hoody.

They'd been allowed to get changed into their home clothes after dinner, so their uniform wouldn't get any dirtier than it already was. Jiro didn't get why they couldn't just wear whatever they wanted outside of training – it wasn't like they were *really* at school. Oh well, at least she finally had the chance to wear her big, purple jumper with the owl on the front (Iida had said it was a fire hazard – Jiro ignored him). That was probably why Canary had called her Owl that time, actually. But *he* was wearing that jacket of his, so at least she wasn't alone in the endeavour.

"Canary setting fire to the rain," Uraraka explained.

Shinso nodded in understanding. "I spotted a guitar," he continued. "You gonna play something?"

Canary just blushed a shrugged a little.

"Want to see my guitar skills?" Shinso offered, holding out his hands to accept the instrument, after he'd pulled over one of the large logs for them all to sit down on.

Midoriya shuffled up beside him and handed over his ruined instrument.

Shinso then proceeded to strum the guitar randomly, letting out a bunch of jumbled sounds, and then bowing as if he'd just finished a

masterpiece.

Jiro applauded him, “Amazing.”

“Thank you.”

“D-Didn’t you say you could play, Jiro?” Canary remembered.

“You can keep calling me Owl if you want,” she said, a little disappointed that Owl wasn’t already permanently her new name, “And yeah – I can play.”

“W-Would you like to have a go?”

Shinso immediately shoved the guitar at her before she could reply.

“Err… I don’t remember that much off the top of my head…” Jiro explained nervously, “But I can play a few rock songs.”

“Go on then,” Shinso insisted, shuffling up on the log so Iida could sit down too. He’d seemingly given up on stopping the others from whatever antics they’d been up to anyway, then heard Shinso’s attempt at music and wandered over to escape.

So, she played – just a few chords, but by the end, she had everyone clapping enthusiastically, and she was blushing almost as furiously as Canary often did.

She was also vaguely aware that the rest of the hero course now knew of the instrument’s presence. They’d stopped laughing like hyenas to listen in, anyway.

“Wow, you’re really good!” Canary exclaimed, stars in his eyes as he accepted his instrument back.

“Siren’s back,” Jiro pointed out, avoiding the compliment as she gazed at the little bird on Canary’s head. Maybe she’d been there the whole time – who knows?

“Right, your go, Midoriya – but don’t feel bad if you’re not as good as I am,” said Shinso.

Canary picked at one of the burnt patches on his guitar. “I-I don’t know…”

“You don’t have to sing,” Uraraka interjected. She was lying on the ground, legs in the air and chin resting in her hands. “But Mina said

you played sometimes when you did dance! Is it less scary to just play instead of sing?"

"Y-Yeah… I guess so…" he admitted with a shrug.

"Give it a go then," Jiro added, "We'd love to hear – obviously though, you don't have to if you don't want to."

"We could hear Raven sing instead," Todoroki suggested.

"Not a chance," Shinso snapped, but he was still smiling.

But their attention was suddenly drawn from their conversation, by the gentle sound, of Canary beginning to strum a tune.

~ Fireflies – Owl City ~

"Hey, I know this song!" Jiro exclaimed eagerly – a little too eagerly, she hoped it didn't sound weird. "I-I mean – it's a nice song…"

"I don't think I know it," Uraraka laughed nervously. "I should really listen to more of Canary's music – you could send us a playlist or something!"

"It's called Fireflies," Jiro explained hastily.

"Oh – that's cute! What do you think the power would be?"

"I guess we'll only find out if Canary sings," Todoroki acknowledged innocently, not even looking at Canary as he said it.

Canary struggled to supress his smile as the music began to build, and Jiro absentmindedly tapped a beat on the side of the log, swaying from side to side – even Siren was whistling along.

But then, Canary took a deep, unsteady breath and –

"*You would not believe your eyes –"*

– he *sang.*

The five of them cheered and clapped as Midoriya grinned widely, continuing to sing.

"*– lit up the world as I fell asleep…"*

The rest of the group, from the other side of the bonfire, stopped

talking immediately as they heard his beautiful voice ring out.

"'Cause they fill the open air – and leave teardrops everywhere…"

Jiro caught a couple of the others take out their phones to record – either video or just voice. Jiro reached into her pocket and did the same, making sure not to frighten Canary off from singing as she did so.

"*I'd like to make myself believe…"*

"*That planet Earth turns slowly…"*

The others stared as Jiro sang along – they hadn't heard her sing before. But Jiro wasn't going to pass up on an opportunity to sing with *Canary*.

He looked ecstatic as they continued to sing together, "*– everything is never as it seems…"*

And then –

The others leapt back in utter surprise as all around them – little lights whizzed around, filling the sky. Siren took flight from Midoriya's air to join them – like a murmuration of birds as phantom fireflies lit up the night – even brighter than the bonfire, sparkling like stars.

"*A fox-trot above my head – a sock-hop beneath my bed –"*

Canary stood up, grinning from ear to ear as he started dance around with the others as they clapped and cheered.

"*I'd like to make myself believe!"*

They were all dancing now – the lights glittering around them. Jiro didn't know how to dance – she didn't think any of them did.

"*– turns slowly…"*

But it wasn't Canary's Quirk that made them do it – it was just his singing alone, and the joy that he radiated, that spread on to them.

"'Cause everything is never as it seems…"

She sat on the cliff edge, dangling her legs over the side as she hummed one of the songs Canary played over the radio a while back.

He was just down there – where the lights were.

Oh! She was so *excited* to finally meet him!

It was such a shame she had to wear this totally-not-at-all-cute mask thingy. It ruined her entire outfit! Would it *kill* them to make it a little more stylish?! *She* could kill them… come to think of it… Yeah – that would make it better!

A little blood always made *everything* better.

She couldn't wait to see Canary's!

Chapter End Notes

Songs used in this chapter:

Fireflies – Owl City – cover by Tanner Patrick

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lQ1xyimpt4Q

I know it isn't just guitar and voice used in this cover, but I liked it so I used it anyway, just ignore the fact that other instruments that aren't present in the story are used XD

Art!

Thelovypop17 has drawn Canary and Raven with our aria girls! And then went at it *again* with another winged Midoriya

And **anonymouseling** from Tumblr *and* Discord has done a lovely transition from super shy mute Midoriya, to Canary – free

as a bird!

Finally, A Dust Speak Fluent in Nothing drew a bit of a mix-match of AUs *including* this one! (he has a little Siren on his shoulder)

Potatoes aren't actually necessarily poisonous raw. I mean they can't be super good for you if you eat too many, and they definitely don't taste too good. Either a) Midoriya is wrong about a fact, because he's only human (hehe you'll get that reference soon), b) I made a mistake and I'm covering my own tracks, or c) Midoriya doesn't want his friend eating raw potatoes

A Spontaneous Duet

Chapter Notes

Hiya guys! First of all, I know this chapter is kind of short by my standards, and I'm really sorry for that but here we are –

But before you start reading this chapter – I would advice going back and checking some of the tags :D

We've reached the top of the roller-coaster –

Time to go back down.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya was trembling. He was holding the little piece of paper, containing the number of his partner, in his hand so tightly that it was about to rip. But that was mainly out of stress – he'd been paired up with Jiro, which he was rather happy about. What he *wasn't* so keen on, was this 'test of courage' idea.

Midoriya flinched at the slamming of a door – or at the very *presence* of some people. He was going to scare himself *silly* and pass out in the middle of the forest.

Jiro didn't look much happier. "Can we just fly to the midway point and back?" she quired as the group ahead of them eagerly trudged into the forest, where class B was waiting in the shadows.

"No cheating!" Pixie Bob yelled at them as she overheard their conversation.

“Worth a shot,” Jiro groaned.

At least Midoriya had his attack bird, Siren, to protect him.

Shinso had gone into the forest first, smiling brilliantly as he braved *the test of courage* beside his ‘raven friend’, Tokoyami, who he hadn’t spoken to until two minutes ago, but they *already* seemed to get along.

Todoroki had been stuck with Kacchan. They went into the woods next. Of course, no one but Shinso (and possibly Uraraka…) knew about the… *adverse* relationship between Midoriya and Kacchan. But everyone felt sorry enough for Todoroki anyway. He didn’t seem so bothered though, when he wandered into the forest, his hands in his jacket pocket.

Midoriya *had* been wearing his own jacket – but the summer evening was surprisingly warm. Actually, that might have just been because he was shaking in fear... Either way – he’d been sure to take his phone out of his pocket and shove it into that of his shorts. But *then* Pixie Bob said he wasn’t even allowed to use it as a torch!

Him and Jiro were *doomed.*

“I hate scary things,” she voiced. “Why can’t we opt out of this?”

“I don’t like them either…” Midoriya moaned.

“Ok! Team four – you’re next!” Mandalay called out, once Yaoyorozu and Aoyama had been gone for long enough.

Jiro grabbed onto Midoriya’s shoulders and groaned sorrowfully as the two of them nervously hobbled forwards.

“Good luck, you guys!” Uraraka yelled after them, just after they stepped across the threshold of the woods. “I’m sure you’ll be fine!”

“Don’t say that!” Jiro snapped, letting go at Midoriya to turn around and glare at her for jinxing it.

“Come on, you two – you’re holding us up!” Pixie Bob encouraged, waving a fake cat paw at them.

Nervously, Jiro gripped Midoriya’s arm as they scurried into the forest, the trees soon blocking out the light of the lodge.

“O-Ok, here’s the plan,” Midoriya whispered, “We get through here as quickly and as quietly as possible –”

“Eek! What was that?!” Jiro suddenly jumped, her nails digging into Midoriya’s arm.

Midoriya winced, “I-I didn’t hear anything –”

“Ah – there it is again!” she started wailing and jumping up and down, “I don’t like this – no – no – *no*!”

“I think – m-maybe you’re just hearing a-animals in the forest?” Midoriya suggested – glancing around nervously.

Jiro was holding up her AUX plugs like a radar, flicking them around at the slightest sound – wind in the leaves – rodents in the undergrowth – birds in the trees.

…Whatever that was – rustling in the bushes.

Jiro had noticed it before Midoriya, and pointing at it with a shaking hand, tugging on Midoriya’s arm and backing away. Then, all of a sudden –

“*ROAR!”* a great beast leapt from the shadows.

“AHHHHHHHH!” the two of them screamed, clutching onto each other in the panic.

Until they realised the beast was wearing glasses.

Siren let out that chirpy little laugh of hers, joining in with the group of 1-B students, hiding in the bushes.

“You two were the best so far!” Komori exclaimed bouncing into view.

“That’s not fair!” Jiro whined.

Midoriya just nodded frantically in agreement.

The beast turned back into his normal self – Shishida from class B.

“Fun, fun!” Pony Tsunotori exclaimed, mimicking Komori’s excitable actions, “Now you go – next team!”

“Yes, yes – let’s go –” Jiro approved, pushing Midoriya down the path.

“Bye, Canary!” Komori grinned, hurrying back into her hiding spot with Pony.

“Bye!” Midoriya waved back at them, far less frightened now he knew it was just the first of class B’s tricks. It didn’t mean he was looking forward to the rest of them though.

The woods were eerily silent – at least, to Midoriya they were. Jiro kept tripping over her own feet, arms held tight against her chest in panic as she constantly glanced around, squealing at the slightest indication that someone – or some*thing* – might be hiding, just beyond the dirt track they followed.

Siren started filling that silence with her gentle singing – which made Midoriya feel a little less nervous.

“What do you think the other members of class B will do?” Midoriya whispered to Jiro. The sound of his voice made her jump.

“I don’t know!” she sighed, “You probably know their Quirks better than me…”

“Have you not done any joint training with them or something?”

“No? Not yet, at least.” Jiro was still glancing around fearfully, but the conversation seemed to be calming her down by a slight margin. “What do you think?”

“Um… well – Shiozaki could use her vines to make it look like the forest is coming to life… Kamakiri could probably do a similar thing to S-Shishida – jump out of the bushes with his blade Quirk. Kuroiro can melt into blackness… so it’s pretty obvious what he’ll be doing. Oh, Yanagi’s Quirk is called poltergeist! So, she would be pretty good at this – m-maybe she’ll –”

“Ah, no!” Jiro cried, “Stop – stop! It’s just making me more nervous… and your muttering’s just merging with Siren’s singing and I can barely hear – Ah! What was that?!”

“I-I think that was an owl,” Midoriya chuckled.

“Oh, shut up – it’s not funny!” she moaned. “I would be fine if I didn’t know there were twenty people hiding somewhere around here – just waiting for us to come their way!”

They’d stopped now, as Midoriya tried to calm Jiro down a little. Siren had stopped singing too – leaving the overbearing silence behind.

“Damnit,” Jiro grumbled, “We must be near the next group – who out of class B can make all this fog?”

Midoriya frowned, “Fog?”

He gazed around at the surrounding woodland. Jiro was right – a slither of grey mist snaked through the trees towards them, moving slowly – unnaturally.

“Um… well, Komori could we her spores – but we’ve already seen her. Perhaps Fukidashi? He can turn onomatopoeias into reality – but I don’t know any of those which could make all this fog…” Midoriya started backing away unsurely, this didn’t seem right…

And then –

“Siren!” Midoriya cried as the little bird toppled off his shoulder. He caught her fallen form in his hands, her wings outstretched and beak hanging slightly open.

“What’s wrong with her?” Jiro asked in concern – pulling Midoriya away from the approaching mist.

Her little chest was still rising and falling. It seemed like she was asleep, but how –

“The fog,” Midoriya realised, staring at the substance that continued to creep towards them. “It’s poisonous…”

“What?!” Jiro exclaimed, “But I thought you said only Komori could do something like that – and this isn’t spores, it’s –”

“You smell that? Something’s burning –”

That was when they heard it – Mandalay’s voice in their head, *“Two villains attacked us! It’s possible there are more coming –”*

“Villains?” Jiro repeated, shocked as the two of them continued to back away from the relentless gas.

“*Everyone return to camp immediately; we’re regrouping. Do not engage any enemies!”*

“How did they find us?” Jiro gaped. There was no reply Midoriya could possibly give – so he grabbed her wrist and pulled her down the path, running as fast as they could away from the poison, holding Siren’s limp form against his chest as he did so.

“It’s no use!” Jiro exclaimed, “It’s catching up with us –”

She was right – the air was becoming thicker as she spoke. With no hands free, Midoriya couldn’t cover his mouth like Jiro could as he began to cough. So, he diverted path and went straight for the nearest tree.

By gingerly dropping Siren into one of the pockets in his shorts, he grabbed the lowest branch and hauled himself up, indicating to Jiro to follow him.

She did – tucking her chin into her elbow as she climbed up – as high into the tree as they could. It was fortunately rather sturdy and so supported both their weights, as their heads peered out over the canopy, taking big gulps of the fresher, night air.

“The gas is denser than the rest of the air,” Midoriya panted, relieved to be able to breathe freely again. “It sinks – as long as we stay up high, we’ll be safe from it.”

“R-Right,” Jiro replied, gazing out over the forest. Her eyes widened at the sight of the smoke they’d smelt earlier – fuelled by great blue flames, not far away. “What now?”

Midoriya glanced around – he couldn’t see where camp was – the smoke and fire blocked his view. After a moment’s thought, he reached down for his other pocket – where his phone lay next to the bag of throat lozenges he’d been carrying around all day for him and Koda – as well as Fukidashi, who, according to Komori, also got a sore throat after using his Quirk too much.

He tapped on his messaging app – but there was no signal – nothing he could use to communicate with the others, like he had in Hosu.

Jiro was watching him as his mind whirred. Her eyes lit up after Midoriya’s did the same. Shoving his phone away once more, he pulled out that bag of lozenges, pouring out its contents around his phone, and then, once cautiously handing Siren over to Jiro, did the same for the equally sized bag in his other pocket, containing Siren’s bird seed, which was now littered all over the tree’s branches and leaves.

“What are you –” Jiro started, but was interrupted by the loud ripping sound that the bags made, when Midoriya pulled them apart by their seams.

Carefully readjusting the strings that once held the bags closed, he held the fabric up to his face, covering his mouth and nose whilst looping the strings over his ears – holding it in place.

“That’s smart,” Jiro nodded, handing Siren back over as she accepted the other bag, and putting on the makeshift mask. “Here – I’ll take Siren. She’ll be safer in my pocket than yours,” she realised, taking the tiny bird back and delicately lowering her into the pocket of her purple owl jumper. If Midoriya had kept her in the pockets of his shorts, he could have easily hurt her on accident.

“We could go back down to the path now we’ve got some kind of mask each,” Jiro suggested, “Then just follow it back to camp – where the pros are.”

But Midoriya wasn’t listening. He was preoccupied by the mountain that rose from the trees nearby – Kouta’s secret hideout.

“Owl – that little boy, Kouta – he’s probably up there!”

“Mandalay’s cousin’s kid?” Jiro frowned, then, her eyes widened once more, “What if a villain runs into him?!”

“We have to go and get him – I’m the only one who knows he goes up there!” Midoriya exclaimed, already preparing to summon his wings and fly off.

“Wait!” Jiro exclaimed, realising what he was about to do, “You can’t use Wings – you won’t be able to lift me off the ground – and then you won’t be able to use them again to fly back with Kouta!”

Midoriya hesitated, she was right, so, instead, he began to climb back down the tree, still cautious not to breathe in too much air.

“Then let’s hurry on foot,” he told her, his voice free of its usual, nervous flare, as the determination to do what was right cleared the fog in his mind.

Even whilst he and Jiro charged through that of reality – Midoriya could see crystal clear what he needed to do:

He needed to be Kouta’s hero.

As they climbed up the mountainside, Jiro became less fearful of breathing the air around her. She took off the mask and shoved it in the pockets of her shorts (she was worried about the strings tangling themselves up around Siren if she put it in her jumper) – Canary soon did the same. His masks were a stroke of genius, but they could only do so much. She felt slightly lightheaded, but didn't mention it – at the moment, all that mattered was getting to Kouta.

They did so just in time.

"– nice hat kid; I like it. Why don't you trade me for this lame mask, huh?"

"Canary – quickly – I can hear someone up there with him!" Jiro told him in a hushed voice as they stumbled up the rocky path; picking up the pace.

"– said they couldn't get a shipment of the good ones in time. Oh well…"

"You stop right there!" Canary yelled as they reached the top.

Kouta was running – the little boy skidded to a halt by them. A great, hooded figure loomed over; his white mask tossed carelessly to the ground by his feet.

"*Oh*… what do we have here?" the man leered. "Why, if it isn't Canary? Just my luck!"

"Back off!" Jiro snarled. She held her AUX cords close to her legs on reflex, but she wasn't wearing her hero costume. There was no way to amplify her heartbeat – it was beating fast enough as it was… but she was of little use in this situation.

"Or what?" he said in a mocking voice, "You gonna take my eye out with those silly little plugs of yours?" He reached up, pulling down his hood to reveal his mutilated face – and a missing eye.

Kouta tensed up beside him, "Mama… Papa…" he murmured, gazing up at the villain.

Jiro saw Midoriya grit his teeth – she didn't know the story behind this, but it couldn't have been good.

"Or is that what Canary's gonna do? Hey, where's your little birdy? I heard you carried her around with you – I wanna see the look on your

face when I crush her skull!"

Jiro took a step back – this guy was *crazy!*

"I'm not supposed to kill you myself," he continued, like this was a casual conversation between old friends. "But no one said anything about the other two – come on, let's have some fun!"

"Watch out!" Jiro cried, hearing the ground crack between the villain's feet as he leapt forwards. She pushed Canary and Kouta out of the way just in time for the villain to miss, barely scraping her cheek.

"Come on, stand still for a moment, would ya?!"

Muscle fibres broke free of his skin, wrapping themselves around his already bulging arms, strengthening them further as he lunged once more.

They all managed to dodge – Jiro grasping Kouta's arm and pulling him to the left whilst Canary summersaulted to the right. The villain hit the rock of the mountainside dead on – forming a massive crater in the wall; showing off the power he held.

"Show me your blood!" he cried, aiming another punch at Jiro and Kouta.

"No!" Canary screamed. He leapt up behind him – bouncing off the wall and slamming his big red shoes into the villain's face.

It took him off guard – startling him as he stumbled backwards towards the edge of the cliff. As a slight trickle of red poured from his nose, the villain smiled down at Canary.

"Ah! You almost knocked out my eye there – *good*. This'll be more entertaining than I thought!"

Canary was fast – evading was one of his strong points; Jiro had seen that in the Sports Festival. He'd held his own against Iida, the fastest of them all. But this muscle villain guy was fast too. As Canary jumped, twisted and turned in a desperation to avoid him, it became clear to Jiro that if they didn't think of a plan, and fast – they were going to be in *deep* trouble.

She felt Kouta's hands dig into the soft fabric of her jumper.

"It's ok – everything's going to be ok," she whispered to him, holding

him close and backing away.

“Is that right?!” The villain diverted his attention away from Canary, charging at Jiro once more.

She pushed Kouta away again – but she wasn’t as quick as Canary.

Taking the villain’s advice, she aimed an AUX cord at his remaining eye. He grabbed it, pulled it down, yanking her head along with it as his other arm swung around.

Jiro curled one arm around her pocket, protecting the unconscious bird concealed within, whilst instinctively holding up the other one to shield her face.

There was a sickening crunch as the villain’s fist made contact with it, tossing her across the mountain side to the rocky floor beside the crater in the wall.

“JIRO!” Canary yelled.

Jiro didn’t register the pain in her now crooked arm – for some reason, her mind focused more on the fact that she was being called Jiro again, instead of Owl. She’d rather that than acknowledge how painful that must have been.

“Yes! That’s what I want – blood!” the villain cried. “Before you die though – maybe you could help me out! I still have a job to do after all. I’m looking for another kid named Bakugo, seen him around?”

Jiro fell onto her knees – not even registering his odd question.

“I’ll take your silence as a no – oh well, say goodbye, girly!”

Jiro opened her eyes in time to see the sadistic man run at her once more, only for Canary to leap in his path, between him and Jiro, jumping up again and kicking at the villain’s jaw.

He was so quick that the villain didn’t even have time to divert his punch, and instead hit the floor beside Jiro again. She scrambled to her feet, wincing at the throbbing in her arm – letting the adrenaline that coursed through her veins block out as much as it could.

The villain laughed again, “You’re both so pathetic! To think *you* took down the hero killer – come on, sing! I want to hear that famed little voice of yours!”

Right – sing! Canary needed to use his Quirk – but what to try?

As the routine of dodging and distracting continued – Jiro now joining in the best she could – her mind raced.

Canary needed to be careful. From what Jiro knew about the Stain attack in Hosu, Canary had used Titanium to avoid hurting himself further. However, a particularly strong punch to the jaw not only had stopped him from singing but had also cracked through the metal the song provided. It left behind a cracked scar that had still to fade from Canary's cheek. If he dared use that song against such a powerful opponent – he could be left far worse than with Stain.

Would a strength enhancer be strong enough to overcome this guy? Could he build up a song fast enough to be effective at all? Perhaps sleeping would –

She had been distracted. Her AUX cord got stuck in one of the man's building muscle fibres. It tightened around it, and the villain pulled her in close. Trapping her within the fibres; the villain now had his hands around her head.

Canary stood back in horror, hesitating – unsure of what to do as Jiro squirmed to get free.

"Come on, Canary!" he exclaimed, starting to press hard on either side of Jiro's head – she yelled out in pain. "I'll crush *her* skull if you don't!"

But Canary was frozen in fear – could he even sing if he tried?

The villain tutted in disappointment. "It won't take long! In the end, despite all these Quirks and superpowers – when it comes down to it, we're all only Human. She'll be dead in seconds!"

That's it.

If Canary couldn't do it – she would.

~ Human – Christina Perry ~

The villain wasn't pushing harder, letting her dangle there, waiting

just a little longer to see what Canary would do.

Jiro only realised she was crying when she started to sing.

"*But I'm only human…"*

"Oh, what's this?" the villain grinned, gazing down at her.

"*– and I bleed when I fall down…"*

"Aw, how *cute* – she's singing for you, little birdy! It's your last song – I don't know what you're saying but I hope it's a good one!"

Perfect – he doesn't speak enough English to know what she was building up…

"*Your words in my head – knives in my heart…"* Jiro sobbed, "*You build me up and then I fall apart. 'Cause I'm only human…"* she trailed off – Canary still wasn't singing.

This was it – it was over.

"*I can turn it on –"*

Jiro looked up again – seeing Canary framed against the burning forest below them as he picked up where she left off.

"Yes! That's it!" the villain cried. He dropped Jiro. She fell painfully on her broken arm. Before she could get to her feet again, his foot was on her side, pinning her down.

"*I can hold the weights of worlds–"*

"Now, you stay *right there,"* he grinned. "I'll deal with your friend first – then you – then the little water hose boy. How about that, huh?"

"*Be your everything…"*

His muscle mass increased exponentially as he charged forwards.

Canary dropped into a fighting stance, "*I can do it…"* his fists raised as Jiro desperately tried to rise once more, "*I can do it…"* pulling herself up by her good arm.

Once up – Jiro joined in, "*I'll get through it!"*

She didn't know what power this song could possibly give – but it was what came to her at the time. There was no turning back now.

"*But I'm only human!"* Canary cried, staring up at the villain defiantly.

The man stumbled back, "Wait, what is –"

"*I'm only human* –" Jiro continued alongside Canary, "*And I crash and I break down!"*

The villain was… *shrinking.*

Her heart was in her mouth as she stumbled to Canary's side, still singing along to the music in her mind.

"– and then I fall apart. 'Cause I'm only human…"

There was a cry of pain from the villain as he fell to the ground – most likely regretting letting Canary sing. His muscle fibres were retreating back into his skin – or whatever remained of it.

His Quirk –

– it was disappearing!

But – that didn't make sense – why was that the power this song gave? As Jiro saw the world – Quirks were what *made* them human; what made them different! So why –

She stared at Canary, stopping her singing.

Oh.

Because Canary had never had a Quirk.

"I'm only human…"

This was what *he* viewed as normal – as truly *human.*

"I'm only human…"

A weak, Quirkless boy – battered and bruised, kneeling before those with a greater power.

"*Just a little human!"*

He charged at the villain, scooping up a large shard of the mountain

from the ground. With a swing – the prosthetic eye went flying – and the villain lay motionless by his feet.

"*I can take so much.*

"'Til I've had enough…"

Chapter End Notes

This *was* one giant 9059-word-chapter and then I was like… err… *no*. So now it's two, slightly more ordinary chapters XD

Songs used in this chapter:

Human – Christina Perri – cover by Austin and Kurt Schneider

https://youtu.be/f98kIowZAUw

Alternatively, here is the original which you could listen to for Jiro's voice instead of Midoriya's! (the link starts at the correct time for the story)

https://youtu.be/r5yaoMjaAmE?t=83

Here is some wonderful art! And yes – I will link any and all art I am given and you *cannot stop me*.

Thelovypop17 drew Midoriya and Siren on ms paint apparently XD – she also drew my avatar and it's super cute! *And* she sketched Midoriya and Shinso! AAANNND this one is titled 'when Izuku sees Kacchan being Kacchan'. PLUS – her fic reached over

100 kudos so thank you for going to read it!

Then 101 from discord drew me as a Hogwarts student because apparently I go there… (you tell one story about there being secret tunnels at my old school –) ANYWAY! It's adorable so I thought I'd put it here!

Revelry in The Dark from discord also drew my cloud avatar and I'm throwing it over here because I love it too :D

SunsetAnimations has blessed us with a lovely rendition of the fireflies scene! And she also contributed to the cult that has somehow been formed on my discord server with a cute little doodle of Siren with a fez

Also, **11_wonders_asunder** has doodled the Setsuna marshmallow XD

And **Pigeonat** drew a happy little Midoriya listening to his music

Oh, and I did a drawing too – based on this chapter kind of. It's here, on my Tumblr – which I don't really understand how to work, but oh well I needed somewhere to post pictures, so there it is. Anyway – it's Canary and Owl singing together!

And **err_we_are_meant_to_be** from Tumblr did a super mini ANIMATIC

OH MY GOD GUYS!

AAAAAAHHHHHHHH – THIS IS THE BEST THING EVER!!

When the Canary Stops Singing

Chapter Notes

> It was at 6:49pm (give or take a few minutes), 20/10/19, when this story reached 50 000 hits. I know because I sat there and *waited.*
>
> My refresh button hates me.
>
> Yay! Thank you so, so much!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kouta crept forward.

He had been hiding back in the cave, his small body curled up against the hard stone; covering his ears as he heard the distant screams of the UA students outside.

But then – that screaming turned into singing.

And now it had stopped, Kouta stood before the sight of the villain who murdered his parents, lying at the feet of his saviours.

The girl's arm was all messed up – she had tears running down her cheeks.

The boy had just dropped a rock – tinted red from Muscular's blood, who he had supposedly just knocked out.

They risked so much – they didn't even have to come up here to find him! They could have run back to the lodge, like Mandalay had said. Yet, here they were, for *him*.

His *heroes*.

"Are you ok, Kouta?" the boy asked as soon as he saw him.

His name was Canary – Kouta had met him a few times now. He was persistent. But his voice was always so quiet, unsure and shaky – like he was scared to speak at all.

Now, as he held out his hand to Kouta, he seemed so much more confident. Like the pressure of the situation cracked and shattered that glass bubble around him – insecurities lost to the wind.

Kouta didn't take his hand.

He hugged him instead.

"Thank you…" he whispered, burying his face in Canary's shirt and trying not to cry. He did anyway.

"Owl – are you ok?" Canary asked after a moment, turning back to the girl – Owl. He sounded like he was trying not to cry too.

"I'm ok," she nodded, even though her arm was broken.

Canary stood up, rubbing his eyes. This time, Kouta took his outstretched hand.

"We should get back to camp – you're hurt," Canary said, gazing out over the burning forest. "If we continue down this way, we will hopefully avoid the gas. We don't have a third mask for Kouta."

"O-Ok," Owl sighed, clutching her arm. The purple of her jumper was darker around it.

Canary let Kouta climb up onto his back, and the two heroes hurried down the mountainside – as far away from Muscular as they could get, running through the trees back to the lodge.

Kouta wasn't sure what Canary meant about *the gas* – but luckily enough, they never came across any. But they heard the screams – distant wails of frightened students in the woods around them. Who knew *what* other villains were out there?

Eventually, Canary slowed to a halt, not far from home.

Owl had been slowing – her arm must have been really hurting her.

"Canary," Owl managed, gritting her teeth as she spoke, "That villain asked me something back there – I'm not sure if you heard it. He said he was looking for *Bakugo*. You do know who that is, right?"

Lowering Kouta to the ground, Canary nodded wordlessly.

"That must be who they're here for – to capture or kill him," she realised. "I-I don't know why. But we have to warn someone."

“W-We need to get you back to the lodge first,” Canary insisted. “Your arm is –”

“Midoriya? Jiro – is that you?”

They all turned to see that shaggy, long haired UA teacher – Kouta kept forgetting what he was called – hurrying into view.

“Mr Aizawa!” Owl sighed in relief – ah, that was his name.

“What happened?” their teacher insisted as soon as he saw the blood dripping off Owl’s hand.

“W-We ran into a villain,” Canary explained. “He tried to attack Kouta.”

Mr Aizawa reached over to Kouta, who was eventually picked him up and held him close to his chest, allowing Kouta to bury his face in his scarf, averting his eyes from Owl’s injuries.

“We… left him up on the mountain side,” Owl finished.

Mr Aizawa turned suddenly back to Canary, “You didn’t –”

“H-He’s still alive!” Canary quickly interrupted, “– just unconscious.”

“Good,” he sighed. “I’ll escort you back to camp. Come with me, quickly,” Mr Aizawa instructed, about to turn on his heel and run.

“Wait – we know what the villains are after!” Owl exclaimed. “But there’s no time to explain – we need to go to Mandalay so she can broadcast the message.”

“I’ll do that –” Aizawa began.

“No wait – you need to protect whoever’s still at camp,” Canary realised. “We’ll go.”

He wavered, “Fine – but tell her something from me too…”

Kendo and Tetsutetsu had hurried away – something about wanting to punch whoever was making this gas.

Kodai was alone for a moment – fiddling with the gas mask that Yaoyorozu from class A had made. Tetsutetsu had brought a load with him and left the remaining spare with her – and the unconscious forms of Ibara and Honenuki.

She hadn't been sure what to do for a moment, but eventually gritted her teeth and hauled both of them over her shoulders, starting to trudge the best she could back to camp.

That was when she bumped into Shishida – apparently, despite the smell of the gas and smoke, he could sense she was nearby. The beast was faster than her, so, Shishida transformed. With both of Kodai's unconscious friends on his back, he ran ahead, back to camp as quickly as he could, knowing that Kodai was following not far behind.

But then – from the trees – someone else emerged.

"Kodai?" the boy called out.

He came into view – the light was dim; it was only being supplied by the moon and stars – or the distant flicker of blue flames.

It was Canary.

She fumbled with the remaining mask that she had attached to the belt of her trousers, eagerly handing it over to him. He had been wearing some kind of fabric around his mouth – this was a far better substitute.

"Did you hear Mandalay's messages?" Canary questioned, adjusting the gas mask after muttering his gratefulness.

Kodai nodded. The telepath had already announced that they had permission to fight for their lives – and that one of the villain's targets was someone named *Kacchan*.

"I-I was the one who relayed it – alongside Owl – Jiro," Canary explained. "She really hurt her arm, so I told her to stay behind with Siren and I went over here to try and find Kacchan."

He seemed so much more sure with his words now – but Kodai was still confused. Perhaps this *Kacchan* was a member of class A that Kodai didn't know.

"Camp's that way," finished Canary, pointing down the path Kodai had been running down.

She hesitated, and then shook her head.

“Y-You should go back.”

She pointed at Canary.

“I can help!” he protested.

She pointed at herself – *so can I.*

He clenched his jaw - an action bearly visible beneath his gas mask. “O-Ok – follow me. Kacchan was in the second group – so he must be quite far into the woods, or somewhere on the way back. If we cut through the trees here, we should be able to reach the returning track quicker!”

With that Canary took off at a run, with Kodai close at his heels.

As they went, Kodai scooped up whatever little objects she could find – twigs, pebbles, rocks – anything she could get her hands on to shrink and shove into her pockets.

They hadn’t gone that far before a loud bang filled their ears – was that a gunshot? Canary just started to run faster – seemingly saving his voice for a more urgent time.

It wasn’t long before the gas faded. Kodai wasn’t sure if that was because Kendo and Tetsutetsu had completed their mission, or because she and Canary had simply run far enough away from the cyclone of poison. She assumed it was the latter.

Suddenly, Canary let out a cry of pain.

There was a crash and a tree came toppling down – Kodai instinctively reached out. Upon contact with her hands, it shrunk to the size of a toothpick.

She screamed as the unseen being lashed out again, leaping backwards towards Canary – whose mask had been ripped clean off his face. The shadows themselves seemed to roar and grow before her, about to bring a great claw crashing down.

Canary opened his mouth to sing something, but before he could – yet another figure appeared. He leaped from the shrubbery, pulling both of them out of the way and tumbling into the thorns of a nearby bush.

Kodai’s grip tightened around the tiny tree in her hand, grimacing

from the damage the thorns had done to her skin. She looked up.

“What the heck are you two doing here?” Raven hissed. “Ah, just – never mind – *stay put.”*

“Shinso – what –” Canary started, but before he could say anything else, Raven leapt back over their cover and started to yell:

“OVER HERE, YOU STUPID BIRD!” he cried, waving his arms about.

There was another roar and more of the trees were decimated with one swoop of the shadow beast’s talons.

“NO! STAY AWAY!” screamed another, gruff voice that Kodai didn’t recognise.

“Answer me, Tokoyami!” Raven continued regardless, “Will you let me brainwash you?!”

There was a tense moment where no reply was heard, and only the howl of this Tokoyami’s Quirk. Ah, Kodai remembered it now – *dark shadow*.

“DO IT!”

There was another cry from the monster – as its gleaming red eyes and black mass retreated into the body of the crow-headed boy from class A.

Raven darted forwards, catching Tokoyami before he could fall to the ground, now free of dark shadow – his eyes blank and unfocused.

Nervously, Kodai and Canary peered over the bush and clambered back over to Raven. He had his hands on his knees now, panting as Tokoyami lay on the ground before him.

“Shinso – what was that?” Canary whispered unsurely.

“We were attacked by a villain,” Raven began to explain. As he stood upright again, Kodai could see the stark red stains marring his shirt. “Tokoyami’s Quirk – it goes wild in the dark. It’s strongest like this, but harder to control. He said he wanted to use this stupid test of courage as more Quirk training. But when that villain turned up and got me – he lost control.”

“How badly are you hurt?” Canary demanded, reaching towards the red patch of his shirt.

“I’m fine,” Raven insisted, batting Canary’s hand away. Suddenly, his demeanour changed, “Anyway – I *heard* that little announcement about *Kacchan*. One, use his real freaking name! Two, if you were with Mandalay, then you should be back at camp now, not here. And three, did you encounter a villain? Is that how you knew about Bakugo?”

‘Bakugo?’ Kodai frowned, *‘Is that who Kacchan is?’*

“Y-Yes,” Canary replied to Raven simply, “Jiro was injured – she’s hopefully back at camp now – but I couldn’t stand by knowing that you all were still out here – and that they were after Kacchan!”

Raven growled in frustration, “Why should you care? You hate each other!”

“I-I don’t hate him!”

“Yeah, of course – I forgot that hate wasn’t a word in your vocabulary,” groaned Raven, rubbing his temples in the stress of the situation.

“If you and Tokoyami were the first team into the forest, and Puffin and Kacchan were the second – then they should be just up here then, back on the path…” Canary concluded. “And if the villains are after him – then that one who attacked you is probably with them now!”

“Damnit – why do I always end up helping you and your crazy schemes?” Raven hissed, balling his fists.

“You don’t have to help me,” Canary said seriously, “You and Kodai can go back to camp with Tokoyami. If his Quirk gets stronger and harder to control in the dark, then the opposite must be true for the light. Get him to a fire or to the light of the lodge. Then, he should be safe to release from your brainwashing.”

“*Or* –” interjected Raven, pulling Tokoyami to his feet unsteadily – “we could take him to Todoroki and Bakugo – who could use their Quirks to supply that light. Then again, you could just do that with *your* power.”

There was a loud crash in the distance – followed by a yell and a chill in the air.

“That’s Todoroki…” Raven realised.

Kodai blinked – wait a second. Bakugo and Todoroki both have

powerful Quirks, but they couldn't use them in the forest in fear of setting it alight and trapping others within it. That meant all they could do was rely on Todoroki's ice… But if they could lead the destructive power of dark shadow into the battle, then they'd win for sure!

Kodai gulped, reached forwards, and tapped Canary on the shoulder.

"I have an idea."

"This is a terrible idea!" Shinso cried as they continued to run.

Todoroki and Kacchan must have been further away than they anticipated, because with dark shadow released and running rampage behind the three of them, whilst they charged through the undergrowth, they still hadn't reached their destination.

Kodai was tossing her collected objects left and right. Great boulders appeared out of nowhere, urging dark shadow forwards; crushing everything in its path as Tokoyami was pulled helplessly along with it.

"CANARY!"

He looked ahead – his eyes settling on the duel colours of Todoroki's. Tsuburaba from class B was hanging limply over his back as he continuously threw up spikes of ice against a frenzied attacker.

"Back off – quickly!" Midoriya exclaimed.

Him, Shinso and Kodai reached the clearing in seconds, diving out of dark shadow's path to Todoroki's feet as the Quirk roared with all its might.

It surrounded the villain that had been attacking Todoroki – a circle of darkness enclosing the blade-toothed man instantly. Within seconds, he was incapacitated.

"We need light – quickly!" Shinso exclaimed.

Midoriya could have done it – he had a song ready and everything. But Todoroki was faster. He dropped Tsuburaba into Kodai's hands and charged forwards with a flame at the ready. Then, from just out of

sight – someone else appeared, cradling an explosive light at Tokoyami's other side.

Tokoyami gasped for air as the shadows retreated. He collapsed to the ground by their feet.

"And once again, I'm a terrible match up for you, bird boy," Kacchan leered, his power fading.

"…Thanks," was all Tokoyami muttered in reply.

"Sorry, Tokoyami," Shinso said, hurrying forwards and holding out a hand to help him up.

"It's ok," he replied. "The villain is defeated. But… I'm the one who should be sorry – you got hurt because of me."

"Nah – I got hurt because I didn't expect a villain to jump out of the trees," Shinso said through a forced grin. "You had nothing to do with it."

"Ok, who's here?" Todoroki questioned, using his dwindling flame as a light as he glanced around at the growing group.

They had Kodai with an unconscious Tsuburaba from class B. Then there was Tokoyami, Bakugo and Todoroki – alongside Midoriya and Shinso. Seven in total. Was being in such a big group wise in this situation? Perhaps it was…

Speaking of lights – Midoriya reached into his pocket as Todoroki did a head count. He could use his phone as a torch if it hadn't –

Yeah – if he hadn't fell on it when dark shadow attacked the first time.

"What was that message that Mandalay sent out anyway?" Todoroki pondered. "Is this *Kacchan* someone in class B?"

Kodai shook her head, and then pointed at Midoriya.

Todoroki frowned, "You're not –"

"It's been freaking years since you last called me by that stupid nickname," Kacchan growled. The group turned at stared at him. "Give it up already."

Todoroki frowned as he glanced between them, "You two know each other?"

“It’s a long story,” Shinso interjected.

Midoriya continued to avoid Kacchan’s angry glare.

“Oh yeah?” Kacchan huffed, “What do you know about it, Eyebags?”

“More than you’d be happy about me knowing,” Shinso hissed ominously.

“O-Ok,” Midoriya squeaked. “W-We should j-just start h-heading back to c-camp now…”

“Wait, the villains are after Bakugo?” confirmed Tokoyami with a frown. “Why? Are they trying to kill him?”

“I’m right here, damnit!” Kacchan called from the background. Midoriya tried to ignore him.

“I-I-I don’t know…” Midoriya answered. “But e-either way – we should try and get b-back. Mr Aizawa and M-Mr Vlad are at the lodge – it’ll be s-safer there.”

“Then let’s get going,” Shinso insisted, and Kodai nodded alongside him. “If we cut straight through the forest, we’ll get back there quicker than if we just follow the path.”

“Right, then let’s go,” Todoroki agreed. “We have powerful Quirks here. We can easily protect Bakugo if we are sure to huddle together as we walk.”

“I can protect myself!” Kacchan yelled, but they’d already started moving. “I don’t need you!”

Todoroki had taken Tsuburaba off the smaller framed Kodai to save her the trouble. Kacchan’s protests were lost to their ears as they began to march through the woodland. It didn’t matter what kind of personal grudges anyone may or may not have had. All that was important right now – was getting everyone back safely.

The rest could follow.

“Walk behind me – *Deku!”* Kacchan hissed, pushing him back.

“Good idea – Midoriya could protect you from behind,” Shinso said – probably to irritate Kacchan on purpose.

Midoriya could see Kacchan’s shoulders tensing in frustration,

growling furiously as he stomped forwards.

They walked like that for a while – with Todoroki, Tokoyami and Shinso in the lead, whilst Kodai and Midoriya lagged behind Kacchan.

Midoriya could finally understand why Jiro was panicking so much earlier. Every sound that reached his ears could have indicated some kind of threat. He was hypersensitive to his surroundings. Kodai was too. She clutched her remaining tree in her hands like a club. Midoriya briefly wondered how her Quirk affected weight –

“Uraraka!” Shinso suddenly called out.

They’d reached the other path – where Midoriya had been with Jiro not so long ago.

Asui, the frog girl – was pinned up against a tree by her hair, whilst Uraraka was in the centre of the path. There was a third girl underneath her. Uraraka seemed to be in control at first glance – but then Midoriya saw the needle in her leg and the red liquid that oozed down an attached pipe.

The villain girl abruptly leapt away, sending Uraraka tumbling to the ground. Asui was somehow freed and she fell to her friend’s side.

There were now nine hero students (if Tsuburaba counted) and one villain. She wouldn’t have stood a chance if she stayed. So, she started to back off into the forest…

That was when those golden eyes of hers reached Midoriya’s green ones.

Toga gasped.

There he was – it was Canary!

“Yay!” she cried, “Canary – you’re *here!”*

“Get her!” Ochako exclaimed, leaping to her feet despite her injuries – but Tsu held her back.

“It’s too dangerous! We have no idea what kind of Quirk she has!”

“I’m a super big fan!” Toga continued excitably, bouncing towards him.

He took a step away from her, near to a girl wearing a gas mask, holding a leafy stick.

“Oh – your lip’s bleeding! So pretty – let me help you out a little more!”

“Canary – watch out!” Tsu cried.

Canary opened his mouth to sing something – sing something to *Toga!*

But then that gas mask girl stepped forward, swinging that branch of hers. She missed, of course, Toga was too quick – like Canary was! So good at dodging – a shame, really – Toga might have been able to see more of his pretty blood if not!

Then, all of a sudden – the girl’s branch wasn’t just a twig anymore. Instead – a massive *tree* was swung in Toga’s face, knocking her backwards and sending her tumbling into the undergrowth.

She scrambled to her feet. She didn’t feel like dying tonight – not when she hadn’t even seen Canary bleed properly in person yet! There were too many people…

It didn’t matter – she would see Canary again later.

The man in the trees tipped his hat to her, a couple of little blue orbs in his hands.

So, she yelled out her goodbyes, and skipped away, glowing red with glee.

“Good job, Kodai,” Shinso sighed, stepping back from the tree trunk that now lay across the path.

“It’s so good to see you guys!” Uraraka sighed, clutching a wound on her upper arm. It was bleeding a lot – Shinso hoped it wasn’t deep. He had been hiding the fact that *his* injury suffered from that problem – but he would deal with it later.

“Who was that girl?” Todoroki panted, hoisting Tsuburaba further up on his back.

“One of the villains,” Frog-girl explained. Shinso couldn’t quite remember her name, so, she was called Frog now. “She was crazy! I think she took some of Ochako’s blood…”

“Are you ok, Uraraka?” Shinso questioned – because he felt like *someone* should ask it. He would have expected Midoriya to do so though.

“I’m fine – it’s just a scratch,” she insisted. “I can still walk; you look a lot worse. What happened?”

“Now’s not the time to talk,” Todoroki insisted. “We need to get back to camp as quickly as possible. You should join our group – we’re protecting Bakugo, apparently the villains are after him.”

Frog and Uraraka blinked at each other for a moment.

“If you’re protecting Bakugo… shouldn’t he be with you?” Frog pointed out.

“Wait, what?” Shinso turned around – but Bakugo was nowhere to be seen. And there, by Kodai’s side – Midoriya was gone too. “Where’s –”

“Nice trick, ay?”

They turned and stared up at the origin of the voice – a masked man, standing up in a tree. In his hand were two little balls of blue, that he played with in his fingers.

“I took your friends with my magic – I used to be a street performer; you know.”

“Give them back!” Shinso yelled.

“Give them back?” the villainous magician repeated. “They’re not your *possessions*. One is chained to the ideals of heroics – we wish to show him a different path; one that supports his ideals. The other has been chained to *society* for too long – a little bird in a cage. Ridiculed and left voiceless – he deserves a chance to make a change too.”

“Take him, Kodai!” Todoroki exclaimed, practically tossing Tsuburaba at the class B girl as he slammed his foot into the ground. A glacier of ice – like from the Sports Festival – shot up before them – covering

Todoroki's side in a thick layer of frost, and the trees along with it.

"Now, now!" the magician continued, reappearing in the air, holding that top hat of his on his head as he leapt. "We only wish to show them that there are other options available to such budding talents!"

"And what if they say no?!" Shinso exclaimed. *'That's it – answer! I only need one sound!'*

But the villain knew better. He started to leap between the trees disappearing from sight.

"Hurry!" Tokoyami yelled, and the rest of them charged after the villain, avoiding the clumps of ice that covered the route the best they could – but the magician was fast.

Distantly, Shinso heard him activate some kind of radio, reaching for his ear under his mask, after sliding the two marbles into his coat pocket. The marbles – was that his Quirk? Trapping people inside those things?

Was this the villains' plan all along? Take not just Bakugo – but Midoriya too? No! He couldn't let that happen – they couldn't take him!

"He's too fast!" Uraraka cried, panting heavily as she tried to keep up with them all.

No – this was no good – they'd never catch him like this.

Think – what would Midoriya do? What could he do without his Quirk right now?!

"Uraraka!" Shinso exclaimed, "you need to make Tokoyami float!"

"What?!" Tokoyami interjected, "Why do I –"

"Can you control dark shadow now?!" Shinso interrupted, continuing to run as they spoke.

"Yes – I believe so!"

"If I can get to the villains, I could brainwash him into giving Midoriya back –"

"– and Bakugo!" Frog acknowledged, hopping along beside him.

“WHATEVER!” he yelled, “Todoroki should come too in case he refuses to speak. If you launch the three of us with your tongue – Uraraka can release her Quirk once we’re high enough – and Tokoyami can use dark shadow to grab the villain! Kodai – you stay here with Tsuburaba!”

“Ok – sounds like a plan!” Uraraka agreed.

They came screeching to a stop.

Todoroki grabbed onto one of Tokoyami’s arms, whilst Shinso held the other. Dark shadow was cautiously released – much smaller and more timid than the raging beast that it had been only minutes beforehand. And then – Frog’s long, injured tongue was wrapped around the three of them, and with the aid of Uraraka’s gravity defying ability – they were thrown high up above Todoroki’s glacier – slamming right into the magician as he desperately tried to make his escape.

“GIVE THEM BACK!” Shinso screamed, his foot digging into the magician’s back with the force of their fall.

“Woah – hey, I know these kids! Who are they?!”

He looked up – his vision swimming with rage. They had fallen right into what seemed to be the villains’ rendezvous point.

“Out of the way, Compress!”

There was a tunnel of blue flame – thrown straight at them. As the one right on top of the magician villain, it was Shinso who suffered from the full brunt of the fiery force.

He was forced to leap back as the villain – Compress – disappeared in a melancholy glow. Shinso’s sleeves were burnt to nothingness in seconds; harsh burns left in their place.

Todoroki leapt into action. Another icy wall was formed between them – but it didn’t last long, melting into a mere puddle of water by the heat the scared villain radiated.

“You and the purple kid – you’re on Shigaraki’s kill list!” cried a third villain, in a black and white suit, as he jumped up at Todoroki.

Tokoyami tried to use dark shadow – but the light of the fire villain was proving to be a problem.

And whilst Compress reappeared in a second flash of light, Shinso himself was a little preoccupied by that psychotic girl from earlier.

“You’re Raven, right?!” she exclaimed, grinning madly as she dashed towards him. “Canary’s best friend! I’m Toga! You can be my friend too!”

“Why won’t you back off?!”

“But I want to help you bleed –”

Bingo.

With *Toga* now lying, blank faced, on the floor, Shinso turned his attention back to the others.

“Todoroki – Shinso – let’s go!” Tokoyami suddenly cried. There, in his hand – were the two blue marbles from Compress’ pocket. “Dark shadow managed to get them!”

Leaving the black and white guy behind yet another ice wall, Todoroki hurried back to Shinso and Tokoyami, “Let’s go!” he yelled.

The three of them charged back towards the trees. Shinso’s heart was beating at an unfathomable speed – his eyes locked on the marbles clutched in Tokoyami’s fist. But then Todoroki skidded to a halt.

“A Nomu!” he yelled, and quickly changed direction.

The other two made no hesitation – and quickly followed. But then they were stopped by yet another obstacle.

“Not this guy!” Tokoyami exclaimed.

“He was at the USJ!” Todoroki finished.

Shinso stumbled backwards – the smoky villain’s golden eyes seemed to stare into his soul.

“It’s been five minutes since the signal,” the new villain said calmly. “Let’s go, Dabi.”

Several, swirling purple portals – at least, Shinso assumed they were portals – appeared around the clearing. The black and white villain left the others behind without hesitation, diving through the portal next to him.

“Hold on, we’re not leaving without the kids,” the scarred villain hissed. Shinso assumed this was Dabi, standing beside Toga as he kicked at her in an attempt to get her to come to. He couldn’t have known it would work, but regardless, the girl blinked and shakily clambered to her feet.

Shinso’s face fell as Compress began to chuckle, “Oh, don’t worry about that – they seemed so proud of themselves for rooting through my pockets that I thought I’d let them gloat…”

“What are you talking about?!” Shinso quickly exclaimed.

The villain didn’t speak. Instead, he clicked his fingers – and the two blue orbs in Tokoyami’s hand exploded into nothing but shards of ice. Then, reaching up to his mask, Compress revealed his face, opened his mouth, and flaunted another two marbles – the ones they had been after.

“What – how?!” Todoroki exclaimed, taking a step forward to engage in combat – but they were too far away. If he dared send another load of ice at them, they would disappear in an instant.

Despite that though – Shinso wasn’t giving up so easily. He stormed forwards, the other two close behind him.

The villain just laughed, and with a bow, he started to back into the portal.

“NO!” Shinso cried.

But all was not lost yet –

There was a glimmer of light – and a brilliant laser was shot forth from the bushes nearby. It was that sparkle kid from class A! The laser destroyed the magician’s mask. In shock, he coughed – sending the two marbles flying from his mouth.

Tokoyami’s dark shadow didn’t seem pleased by the light of the laser and Dabi’s fire – it pulled him back as he yelled out in frustration. That left just Todoroki and Shinso, leaping forwards to catch one of the marbles each.

A flash of fire licked at Todoroki’s already marred face. He flinched, and his marble was now in Dabi’s grasp.

Then a knife – Shinso didn’t even see it coming – but it was now in his

shoulder, and Toga had the second orb.

“Compress – confirm it now – release them!” Dabi ordered, already halfway into the portal.

“That laser *ruined* my finale!” Compress protested, but before he left, he clicked his fingers, and the contents of the orbs were revealed.

“Poor Shouto Todoroki…” Dabi grinned. He had a hand around Midoriya’s neck – the other covering his mouth.

“Ah – I want Canary! Let’s swap!” Toga exclaimed. She had one of her blades at Bakugo’s throat – but disappeared with him before anyone could say a word.

Dabi just laughed, “Checkmate…” and he faded from view.

“MIDORIYA!” Shinso screamed, his hand outstretched towards his friend.

Midoriya held out his hand too – but before Shinso could reach it – the portal had closed.

The three of them were alone in the clearing – the fire still raging around them.

Shinso fell to his knees – his shaking hand reaching for the feather necklace Midoriya had once gifted him.

With it in his fist, he shrunk closer to the ground – his forehead against the dirt.

And there, he screamed.

He couldn't have known how much time passed with him there, as Todoroki's cold hand pulled at his good shoulder, trying to get him to stand up. There was still a blade in the other.

It was only when Mr Aizawa arrived, far too late, that he finally opened his eyes again. He hadn't realised he'd been crying – even his own yells fell on deaf ears. But now his throat was raw – head dizzy – side sticky and red.

He collapsed with his hand still grasping the canary feather – one thought plaguing his anguished mind:

Midoriya was gone.

Chapter End Notes

…yay.

I would like to inform you all that I am now quite a few chapters ahead of schedule – so *no trying to sway the way this story is going* (and no, I will not post chapters early – I wrote extra this weekend specifically so I wouldn't have to worry about it during the week).

And sorry if you didn't want this to be the way the story went! But this has been my plan from the beginning and I never once doubted it. My original idea for Canary was in fact based in the future, where pro hero Canary was taken alongside a string of other pro hero disappearances. And I can't say more than that about it without spoiling what's going to happen in the future of the real story that I am currently writing. But I have a plan! I swear! *I swear* – *cries and begs forgiveness*.

Art time!

Thelovypop17's edition for this chapter is a sweet little Midoriya and she also drew Owl, Raven and Canary!

LadyBecca did a doodle of Jiro in the hands of Muscular!

And ending this art (dump is the wrong word 'cause they're all awesome) *collection* on a note similar to that of the chapter – we have a drawing titled Only Human by xfrvr_anxs_mex, depicting Muscular being rendered temporarily Quirkless by Canary.

How Much Sand Is in This Hourglass?

Chapter Notes

> Why is there no clear, date by date timeline for bnha? I require one!!
> I mean, there's plenty of guesstimates online that I've been using but *still*
>
> Ignore me, I just wanted to complain.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was torture – waiting there at the lodge for the night to finally be over.

Using the boys' sleeping area, which was larger than the girls', they laid out all the injured and unconscious. Jiro was among them.

Her arm was really hurting now.

She'd taken off her jumper – Siren now resting on a pillow beside her – and her arm had been wrapped in a sling that Mr Aizawa had strung up the moment he returned.

Looking around, she could see far too many of class B, fast asleep with that poison in their veins. But not everyone had returned yet – or *been* returned. Jiro hated to think that some of them still lay somewhere in the forest as the fire raged on around them.

She really hoped Canary was ok – and the others too. But she had left him behind… Well, *he* left *her* behind, technically. She had run back to camp after helping Canary deliver their messages to Mandalay – there was no way she could have been able to stop him. It was clear that when his mind became set on something, there was no turning back.

Mr Aizawa had just arrived again, carrying another unconscious student over to an unoccupied bed. Because class 1-B were all in the forest when the gas started, nearly all of them fell under its grips. The new arrival was Tetsutetsu – but he was conscious, just injured, like Jiro, and so was placed on her side of the room.

“What… happened?” Jiro questioned as Tetsutetsu was laid down in the bed to her right.

“Shot,” he grumbled. “That bastard gas villain pulled a gun on me.”

Her breath hitched – it was lucky that it had been Tetsutetsu. Anyone else would have been killed – but he was bulletproof.

“Who else is back?” pressed Jiro. She felt out of the loop – stuck in this make-shift infirmary.

“Kendo from class B,” Mr Aizawa explained for Tetsutetsu. “The two of them defeated the –”

“Mr Aizawa!”

Jiro turned her head to see Uraraka in the doorway, breathing heavily. She could see Tsu and Kodai standing just behind her.

“Uraraka – what’s wrong?” their teacher asked, quickly getting to his feet.

“I-It’s Shinso,” she stammered, “we can’t get him to leave the f-forest.”

“Dove,” Jiro moaned. “Dove – where’s Canary? Have you seen him?”

She didn’t reply – why didn’t she reply?

“Lead me to him,” Mr Aizawa ordered, charging out of the room behind Uraraka and Asui. Kodai was the only one who stayed.

“Kodai…” Jiro called out.

The shy girl hurried over to her, after glancing around at all her fallen friends.

“Sup, Kodai?” Tetsutetsu said. “You’re uninjured – that’s good.”

She nodded, clearly holding back tears.

“Sorry Kendo and I just left you with Shiozaki and Honenuki – but… they got back before you with Shishida apparently – where were you?”

She sniffed daintily, her eyes now settling on the sleeping bird at Jiro’s side.

Jiro's eyes flickered between them, "Were you with Canary?" she guessed, pulling herself up into a sitting position, cradling her arm despite it being in a sling anyway.

Tears started spilling down Kodai's face as she nodded.

And Jiro's heart plummeted.

If Kodai was back and Canary wasn't… wait – no – if he was hurt then he would have been taking right here. Then why was he missing? Perhaps he was with Shinso – Uraraka had said something was wrong with him –

'…we can't get him to leave the forest.'

"Kodai – what happened?" Jiro demanded. She was standing up now – pain numbed by the panic that plagued her. "What happened?!"

Kodai just buried her face in her hands, shaking her head as she whimpered.

Jiro wouldn't be getting an answer out of her any time soon. So, after not much thought, she scooped up Siren and hurried past, jogging out through the door –

She didn't know how long it had been since the attack was over – or if there were still villains rooming the woods – but there were all sorts of police vehicles here now; the blares of distant sirens indicated the arrival of ambulances; villain detainment facilities were already being filled. But Jiro wasn't focused on that. Not even the maddening roars of the villain she and Canary had defeated earlier, as he was hauled away, could distract her.

"Jiro!" It was Kaminari – hurrying over, alongside Kirishima and Mina. "You're awake!"

Jiro hadn't even realised she'd passed out.

"Where is everyone?" Jiro croaked. She knew the answer, for the most part, but she asked it anyway.

"Nearly everyone's back now," Kirishima explained, eyeing the little bird in her hands only for a moment. "Shoji took Hagakure back – I think she was the only one out of class A who passed out because of the gas. Most of class B did though; the only ones who made it out unscathed were Kendo, Kodai, the mushroom girl – the pony one…

oh, and that beast guy. I can't remember their names. I just saw Tetsutetsu – how is he?"

"He'll be fine," Jiro insisted, "Where's Canary?"

"Canary?" Mina repeated, "I thought he went into the forest with you? That's what Iida said…"

"He did –" Jiro affirmed, "but we got separated. Kodai was with him but she's not saying anything to me! Do you have any idea why he's not –"

"HEY!"

They turned around quickly, only for their eyes to rest on the sight of another class B student – the one with the blue and white headband, charging from the depths of the woodland, as fast as he could go.

"HEY!" he cried again, "QUICKLY – she's hurt!"

"MOMO!" Jiro yelled, charging forwards. There was Yaoyorozu, seemingly attached to the boy's back.

Kirishima grabbed her good arm before she could get any further, and a group of paramedics swarmed the two.

She could only watch from a distance, still straining against Kirishima's hold, her free hand shaking and struggling not to drop the canary, as one of her closest friends was laid out on a stretcher and carried into the ambulance – out of sight.

The class B boy hung back a little. He got a few supportive pats from the paramedic staff, but he seemed rather uninjured himself, other than a suspicious red stain on that head band of his. Jiro didn't think it was *his* blood.

He caught eye contact with them, and quickly hurried away from the paramedics who were keen to check over any hidden injuries.

"Is everyone else back – are they ok?" he practically demanded as soon as he had caught his breath.

"We don't know," Mina replied honestly, her big, black eyes filled with worry, and likely tears too. "B-But you're the last of class B… it's just a group of our friends who's missing…"

"Tetsutetsu's the only one injured," Kirishima told him helpfully,

finally letting go of Jiro. “But a lot of the others were knocked out by the gas – I’m sorry, man.”

The boy just nodded, staring blankly at the ground for a while. “I-I thought I was a real goner there,” he stammered eventually. “I was with Yaoyorozu, handing out gas masks and trying to find the rest of my class, when his huge freaking *monster* started chasing after us! But then… when I thought it was about to cut my *head* off with a chainsaw coming out of his hand – he just… *stopped*… Yaoyorozu made me attach this button thing to him as he walked off. I think it was a tracker, but she was hit pretty badly around the head, so she hasn’t been very responsive…”

“Wait, was it a Nomu?” Kaminari frowned, “Like that monster at the USJ?” he said, turning to the others for their agreement.

“I don’t know,” he sighed. “But I’m so freaking glad it went when it did. Do you have any idea why?”

“The Nomu at the USJ was like a mindless beast,” Jiro recalled. “It only answered to the lead villain – maybe the same thing goes here. It might have stopped because its *master* told it to.”

“But why would they do that?” the headband boy questioned. “I thought they *wanted* to kill us.”

“They must have completed their mission…” Kirishima concluded. “Wait – that means they got that Kacchan guy – or girl – wasn’t that someone from your class, Awase?”

“No?” the boy – Awase – frowned. “I didn’t recognise the name so I thought they were one of yours?”

Jiro’s eyes widened, “Oh no…” she murmured.

The others turned to her in a panic.

“What is it? Do you know something?” Mina demanded, placing her hand gingerly on Jiro’s shoulder.

“I-I was the one who delivered that message to Mandalay – with Canary…” she looked to Kirishima, “*Kacchan* is what Canary called *Bakugo.”*

Silence fell among them.

"…is Bakugo back yet?" Awase whispered, breaking that tense atmosphere for only a moment.

Jiro gulped, "Uraraka and Tsu took Mr Aizawa back into the forest to help with Shinso… Other than them, we're still missing Bakugo, Aoyama, Todoroki, Tokoyami and Canary…"

She trailed off as she stared at the dark forest, looming over them. Mr Aizawa had just reappeared. He sprinted from the path, his black boots colliding heavily with the earth as he rushed towards the ambulance containing Yaoyorozu. There was someone in his arms, hanging limp and unconscious.

Jiro saw a tuft of indigo hair.

"Was that Shinso?" Kaminari pointed out, straining to get a better look.

"Are any of you kids injured?" a paramedic suddenly questioned, almost appearing out of thin air at Mina's side. His eyes settled on Jiro's sling. "Come on, let's get you properly checked over –"

"W-Wait," Jiro stammered. She gazed back to the arriving group, wandering towards them.

Everyone was there –

– but not Bakugo and Canary.

It was only when Jiro saw the little handful of iced tears in Todoroki's palms – a collection that was slowly building, that she had a horrible recollection:

*"I'm not supposed to kill **you** myself," the muscular villain had said. "But no one **said** anything about the **other two** – come on, let's have some fun!*

"Before you die though – maybe you could help me out! I still have a job to do after all. I'm looking for **another** *kid named Bakugo, seen him around?"*

"Where's Canary?" she whispered – a question she had asked far too many times now. A question she knew the answer to – but refused to believe.

The arriving group looked to her; eyes full of sorrow.

“A-And Bakugo?” added Kirishima.

“*Where is he?!”* Jiro exclaimed. “Where are they?!”

“Gone,” said Todoroki, simply, dropping the ice onto the ground.

“G-Gone?” Mina repeated, raising her hands to her mouth.

“WHAT HAPPENED?!” Jiro screamed, tears streaming down her face and blurring her vision.

“The villains – they took them both,” Tsu explained, hiccupping on her little ribbit at the end of her announcement.

Uraraka gazed at her with watery eyes, choking on her words as she said, “They’re gone, Jiro…”

As Jiro was gently pulled away by the paramedic – she could see nothing – feel not the pain of her arm, but only the soft tickle of Siren’s limp wings.

But she could hear it all – the blare of the sirens – the sound of water planes, trying to put out the raging fire in the dry, summer forest – an approaching helicopter to take away the critically injured – Shinso’s sobs as he regained consciousness – the wails of her other classmates as they too, came to the profound realisation that the heroes did not always win.

She didn’t hear her own screams.

This time – villains had been victorious.

But… what exactly had they won?

One Day Since the Kidnapping

Aozora tapped her pen against her lip nervously, pacing back and forth across the waiting room outside the studio.

Something wasn't right here – not at all.

Present Mic had practically *run* from the studio only a few hours prior, phone in his hand, shouting as he went that it was an emergency and he wouldn't be able to host his show for the remainder of the day, at the very least.

His sidekick, Minim, had been more than happy to step in his shoes. She was happily chatting away about what ever the heck it was – ever oblivious to the reason as to *why* she was doing far more than usual that day.

What Aozora didn't like – is that she didn't know either.

She was waiting for a phone call – Present Mic had said he'd inform her of what had happened in due course. They'd be the first media company to announce… *whatever it was* – to the rest of Japan once more. Aozora supposed it was because Present Mic was a reliable outlet for UA.

But it was far too early in the morning for this. The sun had barely risen, yet, here she was. She supposed it wasn't *that* different from any other day. She was there as early as ever. The only difference was that she knew something was amiss – and she *hated* not being in the know.

That was when her phone started to buzz in her hand.

In the suddenness of the situation, she fumbled with the device – juggling it between her hands in an effort not to drop it and finally make contact with the answer button.

"H-Hello?" she stammered, knocking her headphones off her head and bringing the phone close to her ear.

She briefly acknowledged that she hadn't checked the caller ID – it could have been a spam call for all she knew – maybe telling her about something stupid like double glazed windows or car insurance

despite the fact that she never actually passed her driving test.

Apparently using her Quirk to scare off irritatingly slow drivers in their mirrors wasn't allowed. She didn't bother taking it twice – it was too much of a waste of her time.

"Aozora – Kukisha just finished up with her report. She should be on her way back now. Sorry it took so long." It was Present Mic.

But… something was really wrong here – *really* wrong. The enthusiasm was gone from his voice; every drop of emotion drained. Not even his calming – *it's gonna be alright* – tone was present now. It was like he'd been infested with the bored Aizawa disease or something.

"What happened?" she demanded, putting the phone on speaker so she could shout right into the microphone. "Tell me what happened! You haven't been that freaked out since Canary decided to beat up the *Hero Killer* of all people! And even *then* you didn't go running out of the studio like… like some kind of… Oh – I don't know! I can't even make a good enough *simile* – that's what this has come to!"

He didn't even *laugh*.

"Look – there's been…" Present Mic sighed, hesitating as he struggled to think of a way to explain this. Or, at least, that's what Aozora assumed he was doing. That was until she listened a little closer – and heard a distant sniffling sound.

"Are you *crying?"*

"Canary's gone, Aozora!" he exclaimed. "Gone – the League of Villains attacked their summer camp and they took Midoriya!"

It could have been the news itself that broke Aozora.

It could have been the sound of the seemingly indestructible hero that she had looked up to ever since she first met him – dropping his phone to the ground and sobbing hysterically.

It could have been the sight of that little armchair in front of her – still covered in pillows and a big, fluffy green blanket that Aozora had recently tossed over it from her own home, purely because she was incredibly keen to see him wrap himself up in it like a burrito. Canary's little nest.

Maybe it was the thought of the shy little boy who wandered into the radio studio – of what he became… of where he could possibly be now.

Aozora was shaking as she lowered herself into that armchair. There were feathers stuck in the back of the pillow she reached for and clutched onto for dear life – burying her face into it as she sobbed.

Her little fledgling –

When would he fly again?

Two Days Since the Kidnapping

Consciousness returned to Shinso in waves.

He blinked and day turned into night – the clock on the wall counting by the seconds. He blinked again – and the sun had returned.

His eyes felt heavier than they had ever been. He was sure that the skin beneath them had sunk deeper into the eye sockets of his skull since the attack. They were already such a prominent feature of his expression. Now, he looked and *felt* like death.

The fact that he hadn't had the energy to do his hair didn't help. It just hung down partially over his face like Mr Aizawa's often did, messy, like Midoriya's – but longer.

Everything hurt.

His arms were covered in thick bandages, concealing burns and the creams and lotions that covered them. His side had been stitched up, and was also wrapped in a few layers of dressings, that had to be replaced as often as the ones on his arms. His shoulder too – had suffered a similar fate to his side.

But none of that hurt as much as the weight hanging in his heart – infesting his mind.

Midoriya had been *right there* – just out of reach. So close, yet so far.

“Don’t cry.”

Shinso let his eyes open once more. He turned to his left, and there was Jiro, sitting in a chair at his bedside.

Gazing around the room, his gaze rested on each of his friends in turn. They were all here – Jiro, Todoroki, Uraraka and Iida. They stared at him in a way that indicated that they’d been there for a while, sitting in silence.

“Shut up,” Shinso hissed to Jiro, squinting as more tears fell from his eyes, no matter how hard he tried to stop them.

“Ok,” was all Jiro said.

And so, she did.

Shinso caved to his stupid emotions quickly. Sobbing silently as he was sure the others were doing so too.

There was a little voice in the back of his head – it sounded suspiciously like Midoriya – that told him that crying was a natural way of removing toxins from his body. Midoriya probably said that at some point – maybe even on the radio show.

Wait –

His necklace – he wasn’t wearing it.

With his tears all but gone – his store completely dry – he sat bolt upright, despite the protests of his aching body, “W-Where is it?” he demanded shakily, reaching for the place where the feather should be lying on his chest. “Where is my –”

It was there – on the nightstand by his bed. With a trembling hand, he reached out for it, fumbling with the clasp as he put it back around his neck.

“Did Canary give that to you?” Uraraka questioned, shuffling a little closer with her chair.

Shinso nodded glumly, rubbing the delicate thing between his fingers. It was remarkable how intact the feather persisted to be, despite being through so much. There was still the occasional tear across the vane – but it was a tough little thing. Just like where it came from.

“How’s Siren?” Shinso asked after a moment, finally letting his eyes look away from the feather pendant and back towards the others. He was right – they had been crying too.

“She’s still at a veterinarian’s,” Iida replied, rubbing the mist from his glasses with the hem of his shirt. “No one has woken up from the gas yet; Siren will prove to take even longer than our fellow hero course students.”

Shinso’s mind mulled over the phase *fellow hero course students*, for a little while. He didn’t really want to think about it more than that. “Who else was hurt?”

Jiro raised her hand slightly, “Recovery Girl patched me up pretty easily though,” she admitted with a shrug. “I was released from the hospital yesterday afternoon.”

“Other than that, most of us only had minor injuries,” Uraraka explained, rubbing at her arm, where she had been nicked by that villain with the knives. “Excluding Yaoyorozu and Tetsutetsu – everyone else in the hospital are here because of the poison.”

“What happened to them?” Shinso continued to interrogate, not wanting to let his thoughts gravitate back to that pit of sorrow and remorse. “Yaoyorozu and Tetsutetsu, I mean.”

“Yaoyorozu was badly hurt by a Nomu,” Iida explained. “Whilst Tetsutetsu was shot several times by the villain who produced the poisonous gas. His Quirk protected him against most of the blows, but he wasn’t strong enough to hold against too many…”

“He left the hospital not long after me, actually,” Jiro continued. “It sounds a lot worse than it actually was. Yaoyorozu’s still here though. She’s being released tomorrow evening if everything’s still ok by then. You’ll probably be let out around then too.”

Silence fell over them once again.

Shinso couldn’t help it – he just couldn’t keep his thoughts away from it.

“What now?” were the words he forced from his throat.

No one replied immediately.

“…We wait,” said Iida.

“For *what?”* Shinso snapped, crumpling his sheets up in one fist whilst the other continued to hold the feather around his neck. “For them to *kill* him?”

Jiro flinched at the words, grasping her earphone jacks and tapping them together nervously. “W-We don’t know that’s what they want –”

“Well, what else would they want from him?” he exclaimed, almost demanding an answer that wasn’t the worse possible scenario. “Kidnap and murder one of the most famous budding heroes around… It’s a way to make a statement, that’s for sure.”

“B-But they took Bakugo too,” Uraraka reminded him. “If that’s all they wanted, then there wouldn’t be any point in taking both.”

Shinso shrugged, “Make a bigger impact maybe? *Bakugo* was the one who won the Sports Festival, remember?”

“The heroes will save them,” Todoroki interjected. He hadn’t spoken much – Shinso almost forgot he was there.

“And how can you be so sure?” retorted Shinso, before gazing back towards the clock.

Tick – tock – tick – tock –

“How do you know they aren’t already too late?” he added.

They were all staring at that clock now. Every second that passed, was a second lost – the chances of their friend returning in one piece were continuing to dwindle.

Tick – tock – tick – tock –

Todoroki turned from the clock to the window. “We can only hope.” Midoriya was out there – somewhere.

But *where?*

Consciousness returned to Midoriya slowly, yet abruptly at the same

time.

He remembered little of what happened after he was pulled through the portal. All he could be sure about was that, right now, he was hanging limp in a chair – his body held in that position by something that tugged at his ankles and wrists. He didn't dare open his eyes quite yet. He needed to process what had happened to him first – from the bits and pieces of his surviving memory.

They were walking through the forest… when they came across Uraraka and Asui. There was a villain there – a girl about his age with wild, yellow eyes and messy blonde hair. She was rather frightening – but seemingly enthralled with him. She dashed at him, which was when Kodai resized her tree, and batted the villain away with startling strength.

There was a cold touch to his shoulder – and everything went black.

Seemingly no time passed at all before he was standing in a completely different part of the forest. His friends were there. Shinso looked worse than Jiro had – his side red – sleeves ragged and ruined, revealing angry burns underneath – there was a knife in his shoulder. But he didn't seem to care. He reached out for Midoriya anyway. But someone else was there too – one hand around his neck and the other holding his mouth closed. Those hands were hot and judging by the flames that persisted to burn the ground beneath his feet, were the source of that power.

There was a rush of air and a sudden change of temperature. But his eyes never drifted further than the violet of what seemed to be a *portal*, before something happened… It could have been a drug – possibly a blow to the head – maybe even a Quirk – but either way, he had passed out.

And now he was here.

Where was… here?

"Come on! Don't you wanna eat something? I'll have it for you!"

“*Back off.*”

Midoriya carefully opened eyes, making sure not to draw attention to himself in the process.

It was dark – the room was small, cramped. It seemed to be… some kind of bar? Wooden floorboards covered in rather suspicious stains – a red brick wall decorated scarcely by a torn All Might poster and a rather large TV screen. There were no windows – but two doors. One was behind the bar, to his right, whilst the other was to the left – seemingly the main exit. But it was what was directly in front of him that grasped his attention the most.

There was Kacchan – he too was bound to a chair. His hands weren’t behind his back like Midoriya’s were though, attached to the wooden slats. His were instead trapped within what looked like a large lump of metal – his arms and legs cuffed to the more robust chair. Midoriya supposed Bakugo's Quirk was harder to keep under control than his own was. All they had to do to him was shove this foul-tasting gag in his mouth. There were two layers of fabric, he noticed. One limiting his speech, and the other covering the bottom half of his face entirely.

“You haven’t eaten in two days,” another voice grumbled – it was the scarred villain that had taken him – with the blue fire Quirk. He was perched on a bar stall not far from Midoriya, observing the scene of the first villain trying to get Kacchan to eat. “Twice – just let him starve.”

“What? No way! Sure – makes things easier for me!”

“If you want water, just say,” the scarred man added, turning back around in his stool to return to whatever was in *his* drink – when he caught Midoriya’s eye.

He snapped them shut immediately – but too late, the damage was done.

He heard footsteps – before his head was suddenly yanked back.

Midoriya didn’t bother keeping his eyes closed. The villain grinned at him when he opened them again. He had a fist full of Midoriya’s hair, holding his head upright from the limp position it had been hanging in for who knows how long. It had left painful aches in his neck – but that was the least of his concerns.

“Took you long enough,” the fire user snarled. “We thought you’d

overused your Quirk in training or something. Bakugo's tranquiliser didn't keep him under for that long."

There was a loud gasp from across the bar, "CANARY!" a voice squealed. "Dabi, is he awake?! He's awake!"

The scarred villain – Dabi – let go of Midoriya's hair so he could fall further back into the chair. He took a step back as the owner of that excitable voice from earlier skipped into view – it was the girl that Kodai attacked at the summer camp.

"Hi Canary!" she said again, practically bouncing up and down, "I'm Himiko Toga – and I'm your biggest fan!"

It wasn't possible for Midoriya to shrink back any further. Instead, he pulled at his bindings in a poor attempt to loosen them.

"I saw you in the Sports Festival and I've listened to *all* your radio shows!" she continued to babble on.

As she gushed over him, Midoriya slowly turned his gaze to Kacchan. His head was held low. He glared back at Midoriya from the tops of his eyes – but there was a certain emotion in them – something Midoriya never thought he'd see – a strange mixture of worry and fear. It seemed to be something he was trying to suppress.

Midoriya wasn't doing as well as him.

He strained desperately against the binds once more. His breathing fast and erratic.

Toga had a knife now – he didn't recall when or where she'd gotten it from. But Midoriya froze when she decided to hold it against him.

"– just a little blood…" she said with a slight giggle. "Then I can be just like you!"

"Back off, Toga," Dabi sighed. "You've already collected what you needed from both of them."

"Oh, but he's so pretty when he bleeds!"

"I can't deal with this psycho tonight," Dabi suddenly proclaimed, leaping off the bar stool and marching towards the door. "I'll be back before that stupid press conference."

"Wait – Shigaraki said to wait here and watch them. *You're* supposed

to be the one in charge," protested a lizard-like villain, dressed similarly to Stain – the realisation only made Midoriya panic further.

"I'm not a babysitter," growled Dabi. He said nothing more, before opening the door and slamming it shut behind him – sending in a draft of cold air – a tantalising taste of freedom, just out of reach.

"He shouldn't be going outside like that so often," sighed one of the other villains. Midoriya wasn't paying much attention to who was who at the time. "He's too recognisable – he'll get us noticed."

"Don't be ridiculous, Magne – what a good idea! Let's go – you go –"

"Twice, go take a time out."

"No, Ma'am – Yes, Ma'am!"

"We should keep to Shigaraki's orders," continued the lizard villain. "Put them back under as soon as we're done."

Midoriya flinched at that – unsure of what he could possibly be implying.

"We'll have to take off his gag to give him water though," said a masked man, wearing a top hat. "What if he uses his Quirk?"

"He won't."

There was now a glass of water held before him by that villain – Magne. She pulled at his gag; it came undone with some difficulty.

As soon as he was free, he gasped for the musky air of the bar – but Toga's knife was back at his neck again in mere seconds. He leaned away from it – unsure of what he could possibly do in this situation.

"The press conference is tomorrow," announced the lizard villain. He still hadn't left his position, in the far corner of the bar, leaning against the wall and gazing at the muted television on the wall. Midoriya could see his face on it – next to the disgruntled expression of Kacchan's when he received his gold medal, seemingly *eons* ago now. "They don't need to eat. They'll be fine until then."

"Exactly my point," Magne affirmed, thrusting the glass of water closer to Midoriya's face.

He gulped – his throat rough and sore from overuse during the summer training camp. But he didn't accept the water. "W-What do

you want from me?" he managed, painfully aware of the threat of the blade against his skin and the panicked cries of his terrified mind.

"You'll find out soon enough, it is a matter of time and presentation," the masked villain informed him menacingly.

"Deku."

Everyone turned and stared.

"Don't take the water," Kacchan finished.

Magne just tutted exasperatingly. She pushed the water closer to Midoriya's face, "Take it or we use one of Toga's needles."

Midoriya's eyes flickered between Kacchan and the villains. After a moment, he caved – and opened his mouth slightly.

The glass was thrust harshly against his jaw – clashing with his teeth as the drugged liquid was forced down. He was so desperate for the water that he didn't even consider refusing to swallow.

"See? Look – that wasn't so hard," the villain sighed, turning to Bakugo and indicating at the empty glass.

"Don't forget to gag him so he doesn't sing when he wakes up."

"Why don't you do it then, Spinner?! You've done nothing to help this entire time!"

"*I* still don't see why this one's here! *He* is the one who hindered Stain's mission to begin with! We should put him down – not keep him like some kind of pet!"

"Pet canary! Oh, can we?!"

All their voices were merging into one as Midoriya's head grew heavy; his eyelids drooping. Whatever had been in that water – it acted quickly.

He succumbed to the sleep easily – hoping – praying – that the heroes would find them soon…

But how much longer?

Three Days Since the Kidnapping

"I don't see why you're all here," Shinso sighed, averting his gaze from the crowd of students that had invaded his hospital room.

"Because we're worried about you," Uraraka told him fondly. "You haven't answered any of our messages or spoken to anyone…"

"Well, I barely know any of you," he snapped, glaring back at class 1-A. "So…"

"You're stuck with us now," Jiro managed to smile. "You're in the hero course, after all."

He wavered for a moment, "So was Canary."

That put a damper on their smiles. That had always been one of the things he hated mainstream heroes for – their smiles. They grinned like everything was going to be ok – like they were oblivious to the dangers of the situation at hand – or perhaps lying without remorse.

"You shouldn't be talking about him in the past tense, man," said the redhead – Kirishima, Shinso believed was his name.

"Why shouldn't I?" Shinso retorted. "He's as good as dead – gone for three days… And we still haven't heard a word from the heroes."

"They're holding a press conference tonight," Iida interjected, his voice cracking as he did so. "Mr Aizawa will be attending, alongside Principle Nedzu and Vlad King."

"Whatever," Shinso sighed. "It won't make a difference."

"There's no point in being so pessimistic," Jiro insisted, twirling her AUX cords around her finger, as if trying to distract herself from her emotions.

"You should always be pessimistic," Shinso replied, hugging his knees, "That way, you'll either be right about the outcome, or won't have to feel the pain of being wrong."

The silence that followed was thick and heavy. Shinso felt like he was drowning in it.

"…You should always be optimistic," Uraraka's voice cut through the quiet. "Because that way, if worst comes to worst – you'll only have to feel that pain once."

He sighed and let go of his legs, refusing to meet her gaze again.

No one talked for a moment more – as if unsure of what to say. But then, something happened that Shinso hadn't expected *at all*.

"Then let's make sure that doesn't happen."

Shinso frowned at Kirishima's proclamation. "And how would we do that?"

"We go after them ourselves," he announced.

Shinso's eyes grew wide.

"What?!" Iida exclaimed, "Are you crazy?!"

"Wait – hear me out!" he protested. "I was here yesterday – and Todoroki was too. I was going to see Tetsutetsu and I think Todoroki was going to see you. I was gonna come to – but then we ended up seeing Yaoyorozu talking to All Might and some police officer… She said that she'd managed to attach a tracking device onto the Nomu that attacked her and Awase from class B – she gave a receiver to them."

"And you're going to ask her for another one," Iida concluded, "aren't you?"

"You want to track that monster back to the villains' base?" Shinso breathed.

Todoroki hesitated, before giving him a determined nod.

"What are you *thinking?!"* was Iida's sudden outburst. "We should leave this to the professionals! Don't you remember the trouble that Hosu brought?!"

"The consequences don't matter," Todoroki continued through gritted teeth. "Don't you see? They could be *dead* if we don't act soon."

"During the attack," Jiro interjected, "the villains said that they were

specifically told not to harm Canary and Bakugo. But they tried to kill a good majority of the rest of us. Surely, they want something more from the two of them than just to get rid of them…?"

It was a good point. It lit a strange spark in the void that Shinso had let his mind sink into.

"Then what do they want?" he posed the question.

"I-I…" she stammered, "I don't know."

"Well, I for one, don't want to wait and find out," Kirishima stated. "So, how about it? They're still within our reach! We can save them!"

"Why won't you listen to me?!" Iida cried, making everyone around him jump a little and take a few steps back. "You could get yourselves hurt more than you already have – *ruin* UA's reputation more than it already has been – you could make things even *worse!"*

"Maybe you're right!" Kirishima yelled, balling his fists in frustration, tears at the corner of his eyes, "But all I know, is that when I was at the summer camp – I couldn't do *anything!* Whilst you were all out there risking your lives; when I heard someone – my *friend* – even if I didn't quite understand it was him – was in danger – I stood by and *waited*. And I can't *bear* to just keep doing that!

"If the villains aren't going to kill them – what are they doing instead? Holding them hostage? Trying to use them to do something – *torturing* them?! You expect me to just sit here whilst something like that could be happening to one of my best friends?!"

"Midoriya is fragile," Shinso interrupted – before Iida could scream at them some more. "He always as been – I don't know how much he can take."

"Y-You underestimate him," Jiro insisted. "He's got a powerful Quirk and –"

"A Quirk that is easily countered," protested Shinso, raising his hand to his lips. "And that's not what I was talking about…"

"Then come on!" Kirishima cried, holding out a hand to Shinso as he sat there in the hospital bed. "We might still have time!"

Time…

Tick – tock – tick – tock –

But how much more?

Chapter End Notes

I forgot to ask my Discord peeps for art yesterday so I've just been scrolling through and collecting stuff that's been sent anyways:

Pigeonat drew this - I'm not too sure what this is - but it's got a Siren on it (and a screaming Tokoyami) so here it is.

This one's by WyvernSpirit - it's Siren with a fez (they're endless)

chaotic_clueless (from Discord) also drew another Siren with a fez (it was the birthday of the lovely Devine on Discord and everyone drew stuff and it was super cute but again, I forgot to ask, so I'll just put this one here and leave it at that XD)

And **Thelovypop17**'s edition today is a sweet winged Midoriya!

A Promise Fulfilled

Chapter Notes

This chapter is dedicated to the people who have sent me a million different escape songs.

Also, this has just been pointed out to me by the Discord crew: https://www.ranker.com/list/best-my-hero-academia-fanfiction-worth-reading/ranker-anime

Canary is number 18.
What.
what the hell -
WHAT?!?!?!?

ha mystery 18

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shinso was released from the hospital that evening, just like Jiro had predicted.

Well, his parents didn't know that. They thought he was to stay at the hospital for at least a day longer – so they could keep an eye on him. But that was a lie he fed to them so shamelessly.

He'd gotten up from his hospital bed, done his hair, and took nothing but his phone and his wallet. Everything else had been sent home anyway.

He checked the phone – no messages from Midoriya, of course. Perhaps his phone was broken – stolen – lost somewhere back in the forest he was taken from. However, despite his absence, the group chat remained active.

Aria in the Aviary!

Dove: *Are we really all doing this?*

Owl: *Looks like it*

Dove: *I still don't know if this is a good idea…*

Crane: *And I completely agree.*

Crane: *But I am also aware that there is no way for me to stop you.*

Crane: *So, I shall resort to joining you. In the hopes that I can make you back out as soon as it inevitably goes wrong.*

Raven: *If you can't beat 'em – join 'em*

Puffin: *A wise notion.*

Raven: *I can never tell if you're being serious or not*

That was why, when he marched out of the hospital, seeing his group of friends there, alongside Kirishima and Yaoyorozu – there was a smile on his face.

He grinned like everything was going to be ok – like he was oblivious to the dangers of the situation at hand – or perhaps lying without remorse.

Either way – his grin made the others smile too, and that was all that really mattered.

"Ok – let's do this."

"*– acted straight up villainous during the Sports Festival, and many have observed Bakugo seeming rather displeased with his victory. How do we know that, if the League of Villains really are trying to recruit him, that he won't join their ranks?"*

Bakugo ground his teeth. All the villains were there now. That stupid vampire girl was still drooped over Deku – but he was more focused on the press conference than he was on her.

His eyes flickered over to Bakugo when those words were uttered though.

"*Don't you dare insult my friend! He's spent his whole life being called a villain – whilst you were called a hero! Well, you know what?! THEY GOT IT THE WRONG WAY AROUND!"*

There was a horrible sinking feeling in his stomach – something he'd never really felt before. He hated it…

Was he really like that? A… villain?

Deku was right – for most of his life, he *had* been called a hero. That was all he ever saw in his future. It was to be one of glory and undeniable victory. He had the power and the grades – the drive and the strength. He would be a hero – the greatest of them all. But now…

"*I take full responsibility for Bakugo's behaviour."*

Bakugo blinked – focusing back on the television screen. Mr Aizawa was there, bowing before the camera and the reporter who had said those harsh words.

"*However, his actions at the Sports Festival proved the exact opposite to what you are implying,"* his teacher continued, his face seemingly emotionless, but Bakugo could see an anger in his eyes, something only those who knew him well could really find. "*With his final match*

being against Canary, and the entire world seemingly rooting for him, it must have felt like a hollow victory. That is why he wasn't sure whether to accept the gold medal or not. He is not a villain – but was worried that was how he was portrayed. Bakugo is trying harder than anyone in his pursuit to become the top hero. If the villains think they have a chance with him, then they are grossly mistaken – I can guarantee you that much."

Bakugo let a grin spread across his face – negative thoughts lost to the wind – or perhaps, the still, musky air of the bar him and Deku had been trapped in for the last few days.

"And what about Canary, Izuku Midoriya?" the reporter persisted. "*With a group that is known to follow the anti-hero tendencies of the Hero Killer, Stain – how do you know that he's still alive?"*

"We're doing our very best with the intel that we currently have available," Principle Nedzu replied. "*I have no doubt that the police will break this case very soon and bring our missing pupils back – hopefully before anything can happen to them."*

"Do you really think that's good enough?" the reported tutted. "*He's already been attacked and injured by the Hero Killer himself under the care of UA. How are you striving to protect students like him in the future?"*

"We are planning on increasing patrols around –"

The TV was shut off by the hands-villain – that bastard, Shigaraki – who turned back to him and leered under that freaky dismembered hand. "How strange – now the heroes are the bad guys! So much criticism… but everyone makes a mistake or two, right? It's not like they're supposed to be perfect…"

"Once a hero receives payment to protect people, they aren't a real hero anymore," the lizard added. He turned his gaze towards Deku. "Someone who strives for fame, glory and *money* shouldn't be worthy of that title."

"If you took off his damn gag you'd find that's not what he's trying to do at all," Bakugo growled.

He knew Deku well enough to understand that he didn't want all this attention for being a hero – that was just something he believed he had to put up with. When they were little, he just wanted to be like All Might – to save others. Bakugo wanted the same – he looked up to the pillar that the hero formed. He wanted to always come out on top

– a hero who always wins, no matter what.

Deku looked to him in some sort of surprise. Yeah, he hated the bastard – even more recently. But now wasn't the time to deal with it. He was smart enough to know when a fight shouldn't be picked.

"Oh yeah?" Shigaraki replied. "Didn't the two of you go to the same middle school? How strange – you must have been there before our dear little Canary went mute; when he was still Quirkless."

Deku's eyes lowered again, ashamed of what he once was – the pathetic *loser* that still somewhat remained inside of him.

"Quirkless…" repeated Shigaraki. "You were a lot like us, Canary – shoved aside. Deemed… *useless*. Isn't that what the name *Deku* means?"

Deku… he flinched at that.

Shigaraki got up and started to walk slowly towards him.

"Kicked – beaten – bruised. Told that you were worth *nothing* – so much so that, suddenly, you find you can't even *speak* anymore," the villain almost laughed. "There are so many out there like you – *we* are like you. Even though we're different, everyone here has suffered – because of people, rules, and heroes who try to hold us back. Did you ever want to be a hero before you had a Quirk, Canary? Were you told it was impossible? Don't you want to make a *change* for those who are still stuck in that position?"

He stood over him – his back turned to Bakugo. But, for some reason, Deku wasn't cringing away this time. Maybe that was because he was stuck between the girl with the knives and the guy with the disintegration Quirk. Maybe there was something else behind it.

"And then – you turned around and found you had a Quirk!" Shigaraki exclaimed, turning around himself to pace across the room as he spoke. "Suddenly, the whole *world* loves you! But before you had it? Well, they just didn't give a damn. It's unfair – this whole *society* is unfair." He paused, turning his head so one, gleaming red eye stared back at Bakugo, "And what about you, Bakugo?"

He tensed as the conversation was swerved back around to him.

"Look what the public thought of you," he continued, gesturing to the blank TV screen. "They saw you as a *villain* – not the future *hero* you

aspire to be."

"He's spent his whole life being called a villain – whilst you were called a hero! Well, you know what?! THEY GOT IT THE WRONG WAY AROUND!"

"They were *scared* of you."

"Well, you know what?! THEY GOT IT THE WRONG WAY AROUND!"

"So, how about it?"

He glared at the insane man – daring him to come an inch closer.

"How about you *join us?* Both of you – help us make a change – we want society to start asking the same questions as us. *That's* when we'll know we've won. And you like winning, don't you, Bakugo?"

He gritted his teeth. They were trying to recruit him – recruit *Deku*. They really were nuts. He proved Bakugo's point seconds later.

"Toga – undo Canary's gag."

"Oh – ok!" the psychopath exclaimed, eagerly reaching forwards to undo the knots on the fabric that kept Deku's voice muted.

"What – are you crazy?" one of the other villains hissed at Shigaraki – and Bakugo silently agreed. But it played in his favour – so he wasn't about to say anything about it.

"We're trying to recruit him," Shigaraki explained. "We might as well be a little more hospitable."

Toga peeled the cloth away from Deku's face. But he kept his mouth shut. The girl was still threateningly close.

"Besides…" Shigaraki grinned. "I promised we'd speak again."

Bakugo had never thought he'd see that look on Deku. He snarled, baring his teeth at the villain, a shadow cast over his eyes by the matted mess that his hair had become.

“But before we conclude whether you will join us or not,” said Shigaraki, “Why don’t the two of *you* have a little chat?”

Deku’s expression didn’t change – and Bakugo just snarled, despite his confusion.

“Come now,” the villain continued, whilst the others just watched on in obvious interest, “have you spoken at all since the Sports Festival? No one could hear what you said to each other during your fight – but you’d certainly worked each other up, hadn’t you?”

“THEY GOT IT THE WRONG WAY AROUND!”

“Shut your damned face,” Bakugo growled. “This is none of your business.”

“Oh, so there *is* something between you two?”

He probably shouldn’t have said that.

“What do *you* think, Canary?”

Silence fell between them all again – filled only by the sound of the villains’ shuffling to and thro; their heavy breathing; the gentle noise of the portal man cleaning the glasses at the bar.

Deku’s voice was barely loud enough to be heard over that.

“I was Quirkless and mute,” he said, head still lowered, but his gleaming eyes were visible to Bakugo as he glared angrily across the room. “I was mute because I was Quirkless – and I was Quirkless, because I was mute. And there is no denying that all of that was *your fault.”*

Bakugo just stared; shoulders tense; heart beating fast in repressed panic.

“But that doesn’t mean I hate you,” he continued to whisper. “You did wrong – and I hope that you’ve changed. However, what I know will never change is your drive to become a hero.” Deku turned his head back to the villains. “You were wrong taking him here,” his voice was getting louder now – more confident; more sure. “You won’t sway him – and you won’t sway me. There is more power in my voice than I

could have ever anticipated! *That* is what I will use to make a difference in this world! We will *never* join you."

Shigaraki hesitated – it clearly wasn't the response he was expecting. But then he seemed to make up his mind, "*Your* fault, eh – Bakugo?"

Bakugo clenched his hands into fists the best he could in the metal cage they'd been confined within.

Shigaraki sat back down on a bar stool. He waved towards the scar-faced villain. "Dabi – undo his bindings."

"What?" he huffed, "You know he'll just fight."

"It's *fine*," Shigaraki insisted, in a similar way that he had when Deku's gag had been taken off. "Besides – he should be smart enough to know that he can't take all of us, especially when his… *friend's* – life is on the line, right?"

Toga grinned and tightened her grip on Deku.

It was not Dabi, but this *Twice* guy who stepped forward to undo Bakugo's restraints.

"Don't you feel *let down* by this *heroic* community of ours?" Shigaraki persisted to talk. "That they turn on you at the slightest indication that you don't fit *exactly* into their perfect mould? Join us – and make your own rules! You'll always be victorious and we'll –"

He didn't have the chance to finish that, because with a loud bang and a sizzle of fire and smoke, Bakugo lashed out at the villains, sending that dismembered hand of Shigaraki's rolling across the floor.

"I'm *done* listening to your endless talking," he thundered. "You'll never beat me – and I'll never join you!"

Shigaraki *looked* defeated – staring at that stupid hand like it was the only thing that mattered – his head hanging limp as he did so.

The other villains were loudly discussing how much of a bad idea Bakugo's decision to attack had been, but, before any of them could do anything, Shigaraki had retrieved the hand, placing it artfully back over his face. Then, the dangerous man walked across the room, and reached Deku's side before Bakugo had dared to make a second move.

Toga skipped back to the bar, leaving Deku with Shigaraki as he

disintegrated his bindings. It took mere moments for Deku to be pulled from his chair, stumbling into the centre of the room – his jaw clenched shut as Shigaraki had one hand around this throat, and the other on the side of his face, touching the scars that the Hero Killer had left behind on his cheek.

“The two of you are important pieces in my plan,” Shigaraki leered.

Deku was breathing heavily, staring down at Shigaraki’s dangerous fingertips with wide, terrified eyes as he tried to escape his grip – but it only became firmer with his struggles.

“Compress – put Bakugo back under with your Quirk,” Shigaraki ordered, turning to the masked villain. “And master – lend me your power…”

Bakugo didn’t have time to acknowledge what that could have meant. He needed to escape. There was a door, right behind him – but if he tried to run, Deku would suffer the consequences and *he* would be the one blamed for it.

“Kacchan – go!” Deku yelled.

Shigaraki growled. Without hesitation, he gripped the side of Deku’s face with all five fingers – allowing it to crack and splinter. He yelled out in pain – which was when Shigaraki stopped – just a warning.

“I knew you would never join me,” the villain told Deku as he continued to fight under his hold, those red eyes alight with mania. “But I thought I would give you the chance – never mind. I can go with my original plan! You see, *Canary* is a rather interesting choice for a hero name… Did you know – well, of course you do, with all the little facts you like to spout – that canaries would be used as nothing more than warnings in the depths of coal mines. When they stopped singing, it would mean they had been poisoned by a gas leak – before the miners themselves. I wonder… If *you* stopped singing – do you think the heroes would realise the danger that *we* pose too?”

And it was to Bakugo’s horror – that Shigaraki’s hand returned to the cracks on Deku’s jawline.

He could do nothing but watch as it crumbled – as the skin turned to dust in the air, and the villain’s hand reached inside Deku’s mouth – open wide as he let out an ear-piercing scream.

Deku fell to the ground – released by Shigaraki.

He was conscious, but he didn't move, only curling up in a ball; shuddering as he reached for the side of his face, hiding it from view.

And Bakugo did nothing.

He had done nothing to stop it – nothing at all – only stared, wide eyed, as the villain wiped his hand on his shirt, leaving crimson red marks behind.

Silence returned.

A buzzing filled Bakugo's mind – it rung in his ears like the aftermath of one of his larger explosions – whilst the very world before him started to sway.

Knock, knock.

"Hello? I've got a pizza delivery here."

What the hell?

Bakugo tore his eyes away from Deku, staring at the door. The villains didn't have the time to investigate though, because seconds later – a bang far bigger than the one Bakugo had caused filled the bar – and half the wall came toppling down as their saviour came crashing through –

– just a few seconds too late.

Jiro stepped off the train to Kamino ward.

There was a certain excitement building in her – Canary was close, he

had to be.

“Those villains are hiding somewhere in this city!” Kirishima announced – way too loudly. “Just tell me where to go!”

“Wait a second!” Yaoyorozu – the voice of reason – exclaimed, “From now on, we’re going to need to be extremely careful. These criminals already know what we look like, remember?”

“We won’t be able to scout effectively if we’re recognisable,” Iida agreed, his hand hovering thoughtfully by his chin.

“So, what should we do?” Uraraka questioned, pulling at the hem of her shirt nervously.

“I have an idea… although, it is a *bit* old school…” Yaoyorozu fidgeted, pointing towards a shop just down the street.

Dirt Cheap Donki Oote.

“Oh no,” Shinso groaned, “No way are you dragging me into this – I see where you’re going.”

“Wait, what are we doing?” Kirishima asked in apparent confusion.

“Yaoyorozu’s suggesting we purchase some disguises as to achieve our goal of blending in,” Iida explained.

“Um – you guys know I don’t have any money, right? Yaoyorozu already had to get my train ticket…” Uraraka muttered shamefully.

“Well, what else can we do?” Todoroki retorted, folding his arms.

“Wherever the villains are isn’t exactly going to be super crowded like this place,” sighed Shinso. “I guess we could just get some surgical masks and pull up our hoods. We’d blend in enough by looking like shady, low life thugs or something – a gang of teenagers wandering around in the back alleys.”

“Are you suggesting we pretend to be villains?!” Iida exclaimed, clearly against the idea.

“Yeah, don’t worry Iida, we all know you’re good at that…” Uraraka sighed, thinking back to their first training exercise. Jiro almost chuckled at the thought of his method acting. She wasn’t even close enough to listen, but from what she could see on the camera feed, it was pretty hilarious.

“Not villains – delinquents,” Jiro contradicted.

Iida wasn’t impressed, “Isn’t that just a synonym for –”

“Whatever – let’s just go with it,” Shinso insisted, marching ahead into the shop. “I can just brainwash anyone who recognises us anyway.”

“But…” Yaoyorozu trailed off.

Jiro just patted her on the shoulder, “We can go shopping again another time if you want.” She had a feeling that Yaoyorozu hadn’t had the chance to hang out with friends like that before. She’d really enjoyed their trip to the mall – even if it *was* cut short.

Jiro’s thoughts of Shigaraki attacking Canary back then, only spurred her to walk faster as they set their plan into action.

They got a few odd looks from the cashier, as Yaoyorozu ended up buying everyone’s disguises. But they must have gotten a few strange groups like them going through there, because the man didn’t bother questioning them any further.

It was a struggle to remove the hair gel from Kirishima’s and Shinso’s hair so they could actually manage to pull their hoods up over their heads. Other than them, the only other person who required more attention was Todoroki, who ended up purchasing a medical eye patch to conceal his scar. They didn’t have the time to deal with makeup.

Shinso had also refused to let them hang around when they spied the press conference being played on one of the billboards overlooking the main street. Although, Jiro surely wasn’t the only one shocked by Mr Aizawa actually brushing his hair and wearing a suit and tie, appearing on television despite his clear aversion to the media.

Wandering through the streets, they did catch a few glances, but no one stopped them, or even tried to speak with them. Once they were far enough away from the lights of the bright city, they were able to let their guard down a little – but not for long.

“Ok, this is the spot the tracker is broadcasting from,” Yaoyorozu whispered back to them, pulling at her surgical mask when it caught in her long, loose hair.

“So, that’s their hideout?” Kirishima supposed.

“Maybe it is and maybe it isn’t – according to the tracking history the

villain hasn't left this location for the past day, but that's all we know," she explained. "One villain is hiding here, but that could be it. They might have Bakugo and Canary somewhere else."

"I don't like this," Iida voiced, "If I think things are going to be the least bit dangerous, we're done. I won't hesitate to call the police either to make sure my friends are safe."

"Well," Jiro replied, "I'm the one here who's got the Quirk for sneaking around. So, I'll take the lead."

Unravelling her earphone jacks from her hoody, she hurried forwards, closely followed by the others. There were still people around, so she had to be careful. At least it was easy enough to disguise the AUX cords as hoody strings, angling her body so passers-by wouldn't see that they were moving around, sensing every little vibration in the air.

The sounds coming from that seemingly abandoned warehouse, however, weren't what Jiro had expected. It was eerily quiet – she needed to get closer. That was why she ended up leading the group around the back of the building – squeezing through into the small gap between it and the one next door.

Once in a secure position, Jiro indicated to the others to keep quiet by putting a finger to her lips. After a swift nod from them, she slammed her earphone jacks into the wall, holding her hands over her ears in an attempt to block out any other sounds.

She frowned.

"What is it?" Shinso questioned.

"All I can hear is this weird… bubbling noise," she explained, straining to listen closer, but she had been right – there was no other sign of life within the warehouse. "Are you sure we're in the right place?"

"Positive," Yaoyorozu nodded.

"Hey – wait a second…" Jiro frowned, pulling her jacks from the wall and turning them back to their right. "I hear something else over –"

And suddenly, a great, white truck was raised from the ground.

"Watch out!" she cried, and the others hurried as far away as they could, before a giant, purple clad foot came crashing down, the car

along with it – smashing the warehouse into smithereens.

They yelled as a great gust of wind, filled with rocks and debris, overcame them.

It took a few minutes before they dared to emerge from behind the wall that separated them from the warehouse. Uraraka made herself and Jiro float, allowing them to reach up and peer over the barricade.

Jiro gasped, “It’s the heroes!” she whispered down to them eagerly.

“Mt. Lady – Gang Orca – wow, even Best Jeanist!” Uraraka explained excitably. “And look! There’s Tiger – he’s with Ragdoll – they found her!”

“Then the heroes were far more prepared than we thought!” Iida realised, a great grin splitting across his face as he pulled off his surgical mask.

“But there are so many Nomu there…” Jiro gaped. “And that bubbling noise I heard – they were in… *tanks?”*

“Maybe that’s why my tracker took us here,” Yaoyorozu supposed. “It was on a Nomu.”

As the others nervously conversed about what this could possibly mean, Jiro turned her attention back to the response team of heroes. They were talking about… All Might?

“Hey, guys!” said Jiro, grasping their attention again. “They said All Might was somewhere else – maybe he’s found Canary and Bakugo!”

“This is great!” Kirishima said excitably. “They’re gonna be ok!”

“Then let’s get back home, as quickly as we can,” Yaoyorozu suggested eagerly, as she too, pulled off her disguise.

“Yes – at least we won’t have to explain ourselves!” Iida nodded as he followed Yaoyorozu down the narrow alleyway, away from the scene.

Shinso was the only one who was hesitant. He waited as Uraraka reached up to help pull Jiro back to the ground. But…

She was on high alert – like she had been in the attack on the summer camp. Every sound reached her ears – including that of the shuffle of a stranger’s feet – back in the shadows of the ruined warehouse.

“Wait…” she said, turning back to the sight of the heroes restraining the remaining Nomu.

“*I’m sorry, Tiger – but Ragdoll’s Quirk was so useful. I just had to take it.”*

“There’s someone else there…” Jiro voiced, ducking back down below the wall to join the others as Uraraka released her Quirk.

“A villain?” Todoroki frowned.

“I don’t know… maybe…”

“Since my body was mostly destroyed, I haven’t been able to stock up on Quirks…”

Jiro heard the heroes make their move against the newcomer.

Everyone – heard what came next.

Stupid freaking *idiot!*

Bakugo just wanted to *scream* at him.

Surely he could have gotten out of Shigaraki’s grip? Sang something – anything! He just froze up with big, frightened eyes – just like he always used to in middle school when he was confronted about *anything*.

Now, he lay on the floor, curled up and cradling his jaw.

Bakugo didn’t have time to lash out at the villains again. He supposed the pros were doing a good enough job at that. He needed to be a hero himself – what needed doing, right now?

Ah, yeah – right.

He hated this bit – the aftermath part. It was pretty bad in class – with Racoon Eyes wailing about having a ‘broken leg’ with melodramatic acting skills. It was *worse* when someone was actually lying a pool of their own blood… no one to fight – nothing else to do but try his best to help someone *else* fight off the callings of… well, death. But, he hoped it wouldn’t come to that.

Bakugo hurried to Deku's side, crouching down carefully where the floor was still remotely clean. He put his hand on Deku's shoulder and shook him gently – unsure if he was still conscious or not. He needed to get into the recovery position if he wasn't.

"Hey, Deku! Deku – you bastard – ah, shoot."

He'd tilted him over a little – red eyes meeting watery green, unfocused and distant – and the contrasting colour that oozed from the side of his face.

"Just – yeah – j-just take a deep breath, ok?" Bakugo said, unsure of what else he could possibly do. "The heroes are here – freaking *All Might*. You always loved All Might – come on, *get up!"*

But he still didn't respond. Nothing but a whimper could be urged from him.

"You alright there, kid?" It was the old man in the white and yellow hero costume that approached Deku first. He nodded towards Bakugo, who took a step away from the pair.

Bakugo's hands were red.

"You must have been scared!" All Might exclaimed when he gave Bakugo a pat on the back, which ended up nearly knocking the wind out of him. "But you stayed strong. I'm sorry – you're safe now, young man!"

Bakugo just ground his teeth together in frustration, staring at the colour which marred his fingertips. He didn't feel safe. And he *was* scared. Not that he'd ever admit it. The villains themselves weren't the worst of it. It was mainly the sight Deku, more broken than he'd ever been, lying there before him.

"Toshinori – we have a problem," the old man suddenly announced, causing All Might's undying smile to waver.

They all looked back to Deku.

He'd been sick on the floor – Bakugo couldn't bear to look at it any longer. But Deku had now finally gotten to his feet, his hand still covering the side of his face as his manic eyes flicked across the bar, backing away slowly from not only the villains, but the heroes too.

He walked right into Bakugo. Deku's gaze zeroed in on him for barely

a second, before he panicky scurried away from him – backing right into the wall beneath the ripped All Might poster, and sinking back to the floor, his body racking with his sobs.

“What did you do?!” All Might cried, his furious gaze turning back to Shigaraki, who was bound within Kamui Wood’s lacquered chain prison.

The villain struggled against his binds, pulling himself to an upright position as he let out a crazed laugh. “I am the poison that silences the canary,” he announced, eyes wild under the hand that covered most of his face. “That which disturbs the *peace* – everything that you stand for! You created a *garbage* society by lifting up such ridiculous ideals! That’s why I hate you; why I started gathering people to my cause. Because you smile so *thoughtlessly* and everyone else thinks they can do the same! I will show the world the *truth* – and the first step is bringing the pillar, that which holds society up, to the ground! Canary showed me that… we had a nice little *talk* at the mall. But now – now, he’ll never speak again!”

The look on Deku’s face was pure, unadulterated *horror*. It was mirrored across many in that moment – Bakugo included.

“Just you wait…” Shigaraki continued, “the game is still mine!”

“Where is your boss hiding, Shigaraki?!” the older hero demanded, leaving Deku’s side only to shout at the villain.

“Just know that all this is *your* fault!” he yelled, *“I hate you!”*

And that was when it happened.

Despite the warp villain’s unconsciousness, grey, sludging portals appeared in thin air, slopping all over the bar, and bringing with it, numerous Nomu.

Bakugo heard a desperate cry from across the room – and his gaze rested upon Deku once more. The same, grey gung was now poring from his face, muffling his screams as he disappeared.

“Young Midoriya!” All Might cried, staring *uselessly* at where Deku had vanished.

Bakugo followed soon after, gagging on the foreign substance as it crept up his throat and spilling out into the air, engulfing him in seconds.

All he could think about as the world vanished before him, was that time all those months ago, when Deku had rushed to his rescue, pulling pointlessly at the sludge villain's viscous body to try and save Bakugo as he slowly suffocated there.

He closed his eyes and let the Quirk take him – wondering, for a moment, if that would be the end.

Shinso had his back against the broken wall, his hand covering his mouth in a feeble attempt to hold back the bile. The others were doing the same.

That villain… he'd obliterated his surroundings in seconds – merely the flick of his wrist had been enough to render every single hero unconscious, excluding Best Jeanist, of course. But Shinso was now unsure if he'd ever be conscious again.

But then heavy, heaving coughs filled Shinso's ears.

"Ah – what the hell?!"

Shinso's eyes widened at the sound of Bakugo's voice. There was clearly someone else there too… coughing and retching far louder than Bakugo had been.

Against his better judgment, Shinso cautiously forced his stiff muscles, still partially frozen with fear, to allow him to peer around the edge of the wall.

The villains were arriving in bursts of black gung, dripping onto the floor and vanishing as quickly as it had appeared. But within the circle of gagging villains, were two very familiar figures. And there, with red on the cheek he held tentatively in his right hand, was Midoriya.

He hadn't been listening to whatever this '*master'* villain had been saying to Shigaraki. There was only one thing present in Shinso's mind's eye at that moment. Midoriya was *right there* – six or seven meters away from him, being pulled roughly to his feet by Bakugo. And he was hurt.

Shinso *had* to get to him. But how? The villains clearly hadn't noticed

they were present, or else they wouldn't have been speaking so freely. If he revealed himself now, Shinso could put all of the others in danger. And could he activate his Quirk on time? The villains at the summer camp hadn't spoken to him – clearly because they had sufficient knowledge of what his Quirk could do ever since the Sports Festival. But he had to try – he had to help Midoriya. If not, could he call himself a hero at all?

But then Iida's hands reached over to him, holding Jiro against the wall and gripping Shinso's side, preventing him from taking a step further out of their hiding place. Over on the other end of the group, it was Yaoyorozu who gripped Uraraka's and Todoroki's arms. Neither of them would be letting them take action.

So, what now?

"Ah, there you are."

Shinso's eyes widened – had the boss villain found them? Had he –

There was a gush of wind and a great clashing of forces when All Might leapt down from the sky. "I'LL HAVE YOU RETURN MY STUDENTS, ALL FOR ONE!"

"Have you come to kill me a second time, All Might?!"

Iida and Yaoyorozu had released them now. They were too preoccupied on trying to stay on their own two feet as the power that the two titans radiated sent great gusts of air across the ruined landscape.

Through a crack in the wall, Shinso still had his eye on Midoriya. Like the rest of the villains, and Bakugo too, he'd been tossed aside by the blow. Now, with his hands gripping onto the rubble in hopes of keeping him in place, his injury was left on full display.

And Shinso could see a flash of his teeth through the side of his face.

Shinso had only just recovered from the villain's – All for One's – first attack, before a second rippled through the atmosphere, sending All Might crashing through the city, off into the distance.

"All Might!" Shinso heard Bakugo cry.

"Don't you worry," All for One sighed, "It will take more than that to kill him." The villain turned back to Shigaraki. "Get off the battlefield,

Tomura – and take the children with you."

Shinso looked away from the scene, turning back to Jiro as All for One somehow forcefully activated the Quirk of the unconscious portal villain he'd seen back at the summer camp.

"We have to do something," Shinso whispered to the girl. "*Anything* – before they get away!"

Jiro blinked at him for a second, barely overcoming the shock of the whole situation. She turned back to the battlefield, and Shinso followed his gaze.

All Might had already returned and had begun to battle against All for One once more. They were keeping each other occupied. Meanwhile, the League of Villains had surrounded Bakugo and Midoriya. But whilst Bakugo feigned a smile and let the fire power of his Quirk crackle and pop in his palms, ready to fight – Midoriya could do nothing but cower beside him, covering his jaw with his hands and quivering. It was clear the injury was bad enough to hinder his singing – and therefore his Quirk. But now wasn't the time to think of what that might possibly mean for his friend. Right now, Shinso needed to focus on thinking up a way to get him out of there.

"Don't let that magician lay a finger on you, Deku!" Bakugo yelled, using an explosion to blast the villain in question out of his radius.

Midoriya had given up protecting his fragile jawline. But fortunately for him, he didn't need his Quirk to put up a good fight. And there had always been one thing Midoriya excelled at – *dodging*. So, as that psychopathic, blonde girl waved a knife at him, enthusing about the volume of blood that persisted to trickle from his cheek, he was ducking and rolling – summersaulting and evading the attacks of every villain that attempted to reach him. But it was six against two – they wouldn't be able to hold up for long. Not even All Might could lend a hand, because of the apparent strength of the villain he was locked in combat with.

There *had* to be a way to get to him… An opening – a mere second that would give them the chance to jump into action.

He looked back to the others. What powers did they have access to? What advantages and disadvantages did they bring with them? How could they do this without engaging in combat? Come on, *think!* What would *Midoriya* do?

Shinso needed to think like a hero…

Midoriya tried to bite through the pain – but the clenching of his jaw only made matters worse.

The adrenaline rushing through his veins as he dodged, flipped, twisted and turned, was the only fuel that kept him going. It numbed the throbbing in his mouth the best it could, but even that couldn't completely dull the excruciating firing of his nerves. Every twitch of muscle around the injury only made things worse – but now wasn't the time to back down.

He had to use his Quirk – there was only so much he could do without it. It was six verses two – him and Kacchan, that was. However, Kacchan was so busy protecting himself, that there wasn't much he could do for Midoriya. Years of practise, however, allowed him to be one step, figuratively and metaphorically, ahead of the game, as he continued to evade his attackers.

"Come on, Canary!" Toga cried, her eyes wide and fanged grin spreading from ear to ear, "Let me cut you a little more – it's so pretty, so, *so* pretty!"

Maniac.

There was a bang behind him. Those years of experience flashed momentarily before Midoriya's eyes as he pivoted and swung out a fist – missing Kacchan's face by inches.

"WATCH IT!" he yelled, sending another of his blasts at the approaching villains. Kacchan leapt away from him again, clearly keen to keep his distance after that.

Midoriya almost opened his mouth to apologise – suggest sticking together the best they could – but a twang of pain told him otherwise.

Perhaps he could push through – sing *something*.

Mr Aizawa had given them permission to fight at the summer camp. Technically, they were still able to. Kacchan had told the villains so

only moments before – that was why he was using his Quirk so liberally now.

But what about Midoriya? What could he use in this situation – a sleeping song? That would probably be best. If he could just hold out – force himself through the pain and sing the lyrics he needed, he might even be able to knock out the villain that All Might was fighting! Yeah, that was it – all he had to do, was sing.

He dug his nails deep into the skin of his palms in a desperate attempt to distract himself as he opened his mouth, the intact skin tugging painfully on the new hole in his cheek – in place of the scars that Stain had left behind.

And that was when he realised.

The words wouldn't come out.

Not because of the mental barriers – no – he had learnt how to climb those; break right through them from time to time.

This barrier was more… physical.

He remembered now – as the shock was slowly fading; he realised what Shigaraki had done.

His tongue –

– most of it was *gone*.

As his eyes widened, breath quickening as the horrifying truth bared its teeth – he stumbled.

The silver of Toga's blade was at his neck in seconds.

"Yay!" she cried gleefully, the sharp edge of her knife digging into the tender skin. "Come with me, Canary!"

He pulled at her arm – trying to get her away from him. It didn't work for long, because that larger villain, Magne – was now at him too, tugging on his wrist and pulling him towards the portal open above

the purple villain's fallen form.

But he wasn't the only one prone to a lapse of concentration.

That was to be expected, when a giant column of ice erupts seemingly from nowhere, towering above their heads. From where it originated, three figures burst through the ruined stone wall – a redhead with the ability to perform such a feat at the front – positioned as though they were competing in the cavalry battle of the Sports Festival. At his sides, was a pink cheeked girl wearing a pair of shiny new roller blades, practically floating above the ground as she skidded alongside them, as the third and final member of the group propelled them forwards with his engine boosted legs. Kirishima, Uraraka and Iida.

They charged up the ice – most likely formed by Todoroki, and leapt high into the air, using it almost like a ramp.

It was Kirishima who reached out, crying out for them to reach back.

Midoriya managed to slip past the villains' grip. He opened his mouth to sing – desperate for his familiar, green wings to burst from his back – but the sounds that came forth held no meaning; no power.

"DEKU!" Bakugo yelled as Midoriya was once again captured by the same two villains, being dragged closer and closer to the swirling, violet vortex.

Kirishima was fading from view – they didn't have much more time.

Midoriya turned to Bakugo, and he screamed. Whether or not it sounded right – it got the message across.

"*GOOO!"*

There was a flash of orange and white light – a trail of black smoke – and Kacchan leapt into the night sky – silhouetted against the luminescent moon as he grasped the hand of his friend.

He gazed back for the moments in which he could; a hopelessness in his eyes that Midoriya had never thought he'd see.

And they were gone.

The villains briefly discussed pursuing them using Magne's Quirk, but with Midoriya's presence, there was no need. A few had been rendered unconscious back at the bar – several had also been attacked

by the older hero, and now lay on the rubble, motionless. But those who remained knew that they still had one of their captives – and even Midoriya knew, there was no possible way he could escape now.

Toga stuck to his side like glue – her blade refusing to budge. Magne was dragging some of the other villains – including the masked magician, towards the portal. But she wasn't needed to restrain Midoriya. Even as Shigaraki yelled towards his master, begging him not to send him away, the lizard-like villain aided Toga in her attempts to get Midoriya closer and closer to their exit.

Midoriya weakened, slaking in their grip. He couldn't win.

If he surrendered to them now – he would be taken away from the battlefield. All Might would no longer be forced to hold back; he could use his full power against the villain who persisted to destroy the city around them – putting more and more civilians in harm's way. The quicker this was over, the better it would be for everyone…

So, he closed his eyes, and let his body be dragged backwards.

"CANARY!"

He opened them again, glancing around frantically; desperate to find the owner of the voice. And his gaze finally settled on a group of familiar faces in the shadows of a devastated warehouse.

Shinso – it was Shinso.

Tears were streaming down his face as he yelled Midoriya's name, he was held back by an equally distraught Jiro, Todoroki, and even Yaoyorozu, someone Midoriya had barely interacted with before. Yet, they were all here…

He pushed back against the villains; a new spark of hope ignited within him. But it was quickly snuffed out. They shouldn't be here – they could be hurt.

He shook his head, not resisting the lump rising in the back of his throat as he mouthed the same message he'd yelled to Kacchan to his remaining group of friends.

'Go… please – go.'

Midoriya's gaze did not leave that of his friends as he was taken away from them once more.

“MIDORIYA – *NO!”*

He let his eyes close and succumbed to the darkness – happy to leave the pain of his consciousness behind.

It was in that moment, with a heavy heart, Midoriya realised that there was a good chance that he would never see those faces again.

Chapter End Notes

First things first… Art!

AmyStarSmith drew a sad drawing of Present Mic realising Canary was gone :(

And **Thelovypop17**’s in the Halloween spirit with a villain version of Canary! As well as another sad think with a sad Todoroki, Shinso and Jiro

Quetzal drew an awesome representative of a caged Canary!

And finally, littlemusic…meiyou from the Discord drew a more ordinary but just as awesome Midoriya with Siren!

Ok, ok *so* –

Canary survives these injuries! I let no one other than those in some canon events die in this story!

Mini manga spoilers ahead…

You know how Shigaraki has a thing for taking off limbs right?

The weird thing *is* – in both those incidences (Overhaul and the Re-Destro guy) there should have been like a lot a lot of blood but it just didn’t happen? Well, there *was* blood – but not nearly as much as there should have been. So, maybe he sort of semi-

cauterises the wounds his Quirk makes, forcing blood vessels to collapse in on themselves and prevent extreme blood loss.

Don't argue with me – wombats I'm looking at you don't you *dare* –

I **will** CRY

Please

Plus, the villains can always do that blood transfusion thing using Twice's clones, like they did with Toga.

…Mini manga spoilers over

Just let me have this, ok? Just… just accept it – it didn't kill Canary just *let it happen*. You have more important things to do in your life than criticise a stupid fanfiction on the internet!

– in conclusion so none of you ask a bazillion questions in the inevitable *onslaught* of comments this chapter is bound to bring:

1. Yes, Bakugo still kind of sucks and still hates Midoriya with a burning passion and this is gonna be addressed and Shinso is probably gonna punch him or something I don't know I'm working on it
2. Midoriya is still missing – the heroes haven't managed to find him and the villains still have him, so no – he couldn't have possibly helped All Might fight All for One.
3. All for One doesn't want Canary's Quirk. It's incredibly powerful and useful, yes, but it has certain parameters which makes it too complicated and difficult for the villain

to possibly find useful at *all*. He ain't singing – and any kind of Nomu's not gonna have the brain power to do that either.

4. Canary's injuries – this was the plan *all along* – I was always going to do this. A steady progression of the mute boy learning that there is power in his voice and how to use it, only to lose it again in a horrifying way and figuring out how to overcome even *that*.
5. There is a hole in his cheek and he is missing a good amount of his tongue. And that *very obviously* makes it a *little* difficult to activate his Quirk. Why do you *think* I stressed the importance of Midoriya actually forming *words* in order to activate the power? (No need to question these injuries – give time and they will be addressed and healed and pose different problems)
6. It's gonna be alright, ok??? If you've read the manga then you don't need to make *too* much of a jump to guess what's going to happen!
7. My hopes are, by the time it does, manga spoilers won't be manga spoilers and will instead be season 4 spoilers.
8. yOu Can'T SiNG aN EscAPE sONg iF YoU Can'T sInG!
9. ***STOP SENDING ME SONG SUGGESTIONS*** – *p-p-please! Please I'm dying – there's too many – you want me to live, right? How else am I going to keep writing this? You want me to leave it here forever more on a* massive *cliff-hanger? Well, then don't drown me with your song suggestions.!*

BEAR WITH ME PLEASE I SWEAR THERE IS A PLAN I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING

…mostly

Those Who Remain

Chapter Notes

Watches the subscription count slowly go down
Glances at the hate
Shrugs and continues doing the stuff they didn't like anyway

Guys, this is my story and I'm writing this because I want to – I'm not doing this for you. I'm doing this for me. I had an idea and I decided to roll with it. I put it online because I thought maybe others might want to read it too – and there was no point in hiding it away on my computer. Don't like it? Don't read it – but don't comment about how much you hate me for writing what I want to write, only to make me feel depressed and I put off writing the rest of it. Because I'm usually three to four chapters ahead of schedule. Now this is the only chapter I've written. If I suddenly died, that would be it – no more Canary – the rest of it hasn't been done.
So, please – there's nothing stopping me from… stopping.

Anyways, I changed the tags. I thought what was going to happen next was really freaking obvious. So, if it wasn't clear at the start, it is now. Stop panicking, it's going to turn out alright.
Reread the first chapter you numbskulls there's literally a flash of the future I put that there for this specific reason! XD

Conclusion:

My story - I write whatever the heck I wanna write
Don't like it? Then don't read it - it's as simple as that.

And thank you for any and all positive comments because I was kind of bitter when I wrote that (this is the next day) - they were great XD

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Present Mic was forced to wait on the side-lines.

His segment on the radio show was cancelled when the ambush on the League of Villains went south so quickly. Now, as the news reporters focused on All Might's fight, Yamada paced back and forth, fiddling with the cuffs on his jacket as he waited for the news to break. He'd heard *nothing* about Midoriya.

He wasn't part of the action team for a reason. If he disappeared from the radio show to join the heroes out to rescue his star student before the world knew they were planning on acting so quickly after the press conference that even *Aizawa* got to take part in, it would have been more than suspicious.

A guilt hung heavy in his heart because he *wasn't there*. Instead, he remained in his office on the very top floor of his hero agency, hoping, *praying*, that things would be ok.

He had been there when friends passed before. Heroes that tried their very best – but that best just wasn't enough. But this was different. This was a different kind of loss.

This was a terrifying, suffocating weight on his shoulders – one which he simply couldn't shift. It was something which stifled his every breath; which pulled at his heart strings relentlessly. The worst bit was the *waiting*. He simply *didn't know* if Midoriya was safe – or if he was still fighting – if he had *stopped*…

Now, he was sitting behind his desk, drumming his fingers against the wood as he waited… and waited… and *waited*…

All Might's fight came and went. The world's eyes were focused on the skeletal man – but not every pair were as fixated as perhaps they should have been. Present Mic's, for example, tried to stare behind the withered hero and into the background of the live feed he had on his phone. But Yamada could not locate Midoriya.

Perhaps this was a good thing! Maybe he'd gotten away before the fight truly began. Bakugo was nowhere to be seen either. It was likely that they were still together.

Yamada was also aware that he would *not* be the first person the officials connected once the whereabouts of Midoriya were known. That honour would fall to his parents. Most probably, Present Mic wouldn't even be told by the police what happened, and he would have to wait alongside the rest of the world to discover the truth.

It was *painful* – having to wait like that.

And for *hours*, he did –

– But then his phone rang.

“Hello?!” Present Mic almost yelled into the receiver in his panic.

There was a heavy sniff from the other side, “Present Mic, Sir?” a woman’s voice responded.

Yamada hesitated, he pulled the phone away from his ear briefly, glancing down at the contact details for whoever this caller was. He was so used to talking to people over the radio, that sometimes he forgot that he could tell who was calling him when using a phone, without having to ask.

It was *Inko Midoriya.*

“Mrs Midoriya? Is everything alright, can I help with something? Is this about Canary – Izuku?” Present Mic blurted out. It was probably too many questions at once, but they had fallen out of his mouth before his mind had the chance to catch up.

There was another great sob from the other end. “H-Have you heard a-anything?”

“No?” he replied, the hope he’d been hanging onto so desperately was beginning to slip from his grasp now. “Have you? Do you need me to help you chase the police up on it?”

“N-N-No,” she stammered terribly. “I-I’m at the station now, not far from t-the radio s-station, actually…”

“Did you want me to come down?” Present Mic was already standing, ready to leave as soon as she said so.

She hesitated for a moment, as if mulling the idea over in her mind. “O-Ok…” she finally concluded, and Yamada began to run towards the elevator immediately.

“I’ll be there as soon as I can,” he insisted, and after a few more reassurances and hesitant goodbyes, he hung up, and charged out the front of the building.

He had underestimated how far the police station was, but he ran the entire way, regardless. He was completely out of breath by the time he threw the glass doors of the station open, hoping he had gone to the

right place.

“I’m looking for Mrs Midoriya,” he said as calmly as he could muster to the receptionist who blinked at him with startled eyes.

She opened her mouth to reply, but there was no need, because the short, slightly plump form of Mrs Midoriya appeared from around the corner only moments later.

“Hey there, are you ok?” Present Mic questioned immediately, skidding to her side and pulling her down into one of the cold, plastic chairs up against the wall. He had sat down too, grasping one of her hands in an attempt to comfort her. She was still crying rather hysterically, her entire body shaking with her sobs.

“I-I-I can’t get a hold of my husband,” she started. “He’s in America – he doesn’t know what happened yet…”

The first question on Yamada’s mind was – *what* did *happen?* – but he bit the nagging thought back, focusing on the woman’s welfare, first and foremost. He pulled a small packet of tissues from his pocket and handed them to Mrs Midoriya – there weren’t that many left.

“You can talk to me about whatever you need to,” he insisted. “I’m a friend – and a hero too, it’s my job.”

She barely managed a soft smile, before she only started to cry harder. “I-I-I just wanted t-to make sure y-you *knew…”*

He blinked at her, his heart racing, “About what?”

She blew her nose, seemingly trying to compose herself, before turning back to Yamada and looking him square in the eyes –

“They couldn’t rescue Izuku.

“*The villains still have him.*

“*And they’re gone.”*

Yamada had been wrong.

The worst bit *wasn't* the waiting – he acknowledged as the receptionist passed both the sobbing adults a pack of tissues each and a warm mug of tea with a soft, understanding smile.

The worst bit was knowing the *truth.*

Twelve days since the kidnapping

"I should be expelling every single one of you," Mr Aizawa glared. "Apart from Hagakure and Bakugo – you either went to Kamino or didn't try to stop those who did." He took a deep breath and sighed, glancing over the group of students before him. "Instead, I find myself increasing your number, rather than decreasing it. You all know Shinso."

No one even turning to look at him when his name was uttered. Shinso didn't even bother looking up at his teacher. He had his feather pendant in between his thumb and forefinger, twirling it gently as Mr Aizawa droned on.

He mentioned something about regaining their trust – about going on to gain their provisional hero licences – but Shinso wasn't listening.

There was an empty space next to him.

Isn't it exciting, Raven?! We're actually *on the hero course – and provisional licences! We've really made it!*

Those words were not uttered – nor signed. For Midoriya was not moving into the dorms alongside class 1-A and Shinso, their newest

member. He hadn't been seen since Kamino – just over a week ago. When he had simply slacked in the villains' grip. He locked eyes with Shinso as he yelled his name, but Midoriya just shook his head, mouthing to him to leave him there as he was pulled out of Shinso's grasp, once again.

No one was smiling as Mr Aizawa led them into their dorms – a house titled Heights Alliance, with a large *1-A* painted above the name. He pointed out the bathrooms; the kitchen and other basic facilities; murmuring about new rules and regulations; that they had the rest of the day to unpack and get familiar with the place.

"Oh, and Shinso?"

Shinso blinked at the mention of his name, finally paying attention to what Mr Aizawa had to say.

"Kouda too – make sure you clean up after your pets. You have special permission to have them here. Don't let us revoke that."

Kouda nodded frantically. Shinso didn't bother.

He turned to the little green bird on his shoulder.

"After I took her back from the vets, she flew off," Mrs Midoriya explained as she handed Shinso a cup of tea. "She was gone for days. I… I thought she'd never come back."

Shinso stared down at Siren, sat amongst that headband she'd stolen from the Sports Festival, now on the kitchen table.

"But… I had to take her back to the vets. She's been acting… wrong. *Wrong for Siren, at least," sighed Mrs Midoriya miserably. "They said she was completely ordinary. A run of the mill, female canary. It's normal moulting season, which explains all the feathers. But it's not right. She's not singing – you see."*

"Not singing?" Shinso frowned. That wasn't at all like Siren. Usually, she wouldn't shut up.

"No… she doesn't eat that much either – or fly around as often. I think… I think she's sad…"

She didn't need to explain why. The answer was obvious.

They sat in silence for a moment more. Shinso stared at his reflection in the murky colour of the tea in his hands.

"Are you excited about the dorms?" Mrs Midoriya questioned, forcing a smile.

Shinso cleared his throat. He might as well make an effort. "Yeah, it… it's bound to be an, err, an interesting experience, that's for sure."

She let out a half-hearted laugh, "Of course, you and Izuku made quite close friends with a lot of class A! It's good to know that you won't feel out of place."

Shinso simply nodded, taking a sip of his tea. It was cold.

"But, um… I didn't invite you here just to talk," Mrs Midoriya continued. "You looked like Siren, when we were at the police station this morning – like the very soul had been sucked out of you. I couldn't bear to see you like that. And then I thought…"

Her breath hitched. It looked like she was trying to hold back tears.

"I don't know if my son will ever return. And… a-and – well, I-I – please. Will you take Siren?"

Shinso blinked. It hadn't been what he was expecting.

"Take… Siren?"

"Maybe she'll make you both happier!" She was smiling through her tears. She looked painfully like her son. "Take her to the dorms with you. If Izuku does *come back to us – then… maybe Siren will start singing again! And she can stay with him after that. But, for now – I just want…" She trailed off for a moment. "Time waits for n-nobody – and we will move with it, regardless of w-what happens. The best we can do, is n-not drag our heels, and find a way to k-keep going.*

"Izuku wouldn't want us to be l-like this."

"Alright," Mr Aizawa sighed. "Get to it – the rest of your belongings are already in your rooms. Enjoy your day off."

"Yes, Sir," the class chorused in reply. Not a single one of them was smiling.

Shinso was allocated to the very top floor, alongside Iida and Todoroki.

There was one empty room between them.

Shinso spoke to no one all day. Pushing the cardboard boxes containing everything he could possibly want with him at UA out into the corridor, he shut the door and started to paint. The walls were soon a deep purple – darker than his hair. He'd downloaded a copy of Midoriya's 'arsenal' onto his phone. He listened to it on loop. It was… therapeutic, painting and tapping his foot along to the songs, thinking about what powers Midoriya would derive from the rhythm.

On an upside-down box in the middle of the room, Shinso had collected numerous items from Mrs Midoriya. They belonged to Siren, apparently. So, basically, she couldn't take ownership of them – and were therefore *probably* stolen. Or, her son bought them – Shinso liked to think Siren just stole most of the stuff. It was a funnier thought.

She had the headband from the Sports Festival – Midoriya's medal too. Then there was a collection of hero stickers – quite a few were of Present Mic. The decapitated head of an All Might plushie was *slightly* worrying, but Shinso decided not to question it. Then she just had these random pieces of green fabric – from who *knows* where. A couple of shiny purple sweet wrappers… torn corners of Midoriya's homework – specifically the parts where a high mark was written in red pen… there was even a bit of scorched plastic that Shinso was *pretty* sure was from Midoriya's wrecked headphones that Bakugo blew up during the finals.

The entire collection was bundled together in what *used* to be a little, circular, wooden box. It was so chewed and covered in feathers and bird seed that Shinso didn't think it really deserved that title anymore. So, it was just deemed *Siren's Nest*, and labelled as such with permanent marker – probably by Midoriya – on the other side of the semi-circle shaped part that Siren had wrecked to allow her easier access. It was conveniently portable. Shinso could just pick the entire thing up, with Siren inside, and carry it around.

Thinking about Siren's antics certainly proved to be a good distraction. Before long, the walls no longer sported a speck of white (except for whatever was under that one feather that got stuck to the wet paint, and Shinso just painted over and let dry). He'd painted the ceiling black as well, which had proved to be a struggle, but now everything had dried, he could remove the white rags (well, white,

purple and black rags) that he'd covered the wooden floor and various items of furniture with. Bundling them up, he chucked them into the corridor and started to drag his belongings back inside.

"Need some help?"

Shinso blinked, pulling out his earphones. "Jiro – what are you doing up here? Isn't this the boys' side?"

"Yeah, whatever," she shrugged, grabbing a random box and carrying it inside the room without a second thought. "I got bored."

"I thought you said you'd be busy all day?" Shinso continued, not protesting as he started to shove various items in his drawers.

"I just said that so everyone else would leave me alone."

Shinso hesitated. Jiro had started decorating long before he had. Shinso just stood on his veneer for a good few hours, staring into the distance and listening to a recording of Midoriya's last radio show. He'd seen her trying to drag numerous boxes and instruments in through the door and lug them up to her room on the other side of Heights Alliance. She must have been trying to keep herself busy – Shinso realised. That was why she was here now.

"What were you listening to?" she questioned after gingerly moving Siren's nest to sit by Shinso's laptop, open on his desk.

"The arsenal," Shinso answered simply. He wasn't sure how much of this *talking* he could deal with at the moment. But Jiro obviously needed it.

"…I don't have a copy of that."

"Do you want one?"

She didn't reply immediately, "…Yeah," she said as she dragged the last box inside.

"I'll send it to you later," Shinso nodded, now hanging up his curtains.

"Thanks."

She just sat there, on his bed, and watched him for a while, as he finished with the curtains; packed away the remainder of his clothes; haphazardly tossed his small collection of books onto his shelves; and shoved the now flat-packed cardboard under his bed.

It was only when he hung his clock up on the wall, that he realised that almost half an hour of silence had passed between them.

He turned around, only to see her holding the very last box he had to unpack. It was small – just an old shoe box. The lid was off and she hugged it against herself, shaking uncontrollably as she hung her head. She was crying.

Shinso wavered, "Don't get tears on my pictures," he snapped. "You'll ruin them with your pitiful, Human emotions."

She laughed but then started to cry even harder. "I-I'm only Human…"

There was clearly more behind that sentence that Shinso could understand, because now there were rivers streaming down her cheeks. She hadn't even bothered with makeup that day – or else Shinso knew it would be everywhere.

He took the box from her trembling hands. Shinso had set up a corkboard specifically for these pictures. Midoriya had a similar set from Aozora, but Shinso had printed off more during the week that had just passed. Moments from right across the year – from group photos to moments in the Sports Festival or in the radio station. Even memories from the summer camp, before it all went south.

"You… want a tissue?" Shinso asked once he'd finally finished pinning up the photographs, pulling an unused bundle from his pocket and handing it to her.

She nodded as she accepted them, trying to dry her eyes, but to no avail.

"I'm… not good at this *feeling* stuff," Shinso admitted. He was all too used to holding a conversation with someone who wouldn't talk back. "Even when *I'm* the one suffering from it. I'm just not… I've never really – Look, Midoriya was kind of like my first friend? And I wouldn't be here – in the hero course – if it weren't for him. He blackmailed the principal to get me in."

Jiro laughed again – he was on the right track, then.

"No, I'm not kidding – he *literally* blackmailed him," Shinso laughed too. "And Nedzu was *impressed."*

"O-Of course he was."

“Yeah! Trust Midoriya to pull something like that. A-Anyway… you know, before Kamino – I-I said that Midoriya was *fragile.* And, well, he *is* – but he’s strong in other ways.”

“He snaps.”

Shinso blinked at her. Weirdly enough, it made sense. “Yeah… he just – reaches this point. And the pressure becomes too much and he suddenly just… ah, it’s hard to explain…”

“He… tosses all of that *shyness* away – and just does whatever he can to make it through,” Jiro finished. Her tears were starting to slow now. There was a good chance she’d just run out.

“Exactly,” Shinso nodded. “Maybe… maybe he’s reached that point now.”

A soft smile appeared on Jiro’s face. “You’re being optimistic now, huh?”

Shinso just shrugged. “I’ve been thinking about a lot. Uraraka made some sense, I suppose. When all hope is lost – force yourself to be optimistic. Because then you only have to feel the pain once.”

She just nodded again. And they sat in silence once more, staring blankly forwards – at Siren, sitting still in her nest, below the corkboard of memories. Shinso swallowed the lump in his throat.

After a while, he stood up. “Come on. Let’s see what everyone else is doing,” he suggested.

“Yeah, ok – sorry for barging in on you,” she moped, smoothing out the creases she left behind on the fresh sheets of his bed.

“Yeah, you should be.”

“And… for stealing your tissues.”

“You’re gonna have to pay me back for that,” Shinso grinned, holding the door open for her.

“Nah – I’m broke,” she said – a slight smile returning.

“Right – you owe me your soul.”

“Oh, no – I’ve already sold it to the devil.”

“Well, looks like I’ve got a legal battle on my hands.”

“With the devil?” she raised an eyebrow as she pressed the elevator button.

“I will win.”

“Yeah, *right.”*

“You doubt my persuasive abilities?”

“Against the –”

Shinso sighed at the now brainwashed Jiro as the elevator started to go down. “See, you walked right into that one.”

He released her and she punched him playfully on his shoulder.

“I guess I did.”

When the elevator opened and the two of them walked into the common room area, they found that a good majority of class A was already there – chatting amongst themselves and munching on what seemed to be plate of curry.

“Oh, there the two of you are,” Yaoyorozu smiled, carrying two plates of the stuff over to them. “We were waiting for you to come down so we could start dinner, but it ended up getting a little late. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Nah, it’s fine – thanks,” Jiro sniffed, rubbing at her eyes once more before accepting the plate.

Yaoyorozu’s smile melted into a rather pitiful one as she noticed her friend’s sorrow. She handed the last plate to Shinso, and then said, “After you’ve finished, perhaps you’d like some calming, herbal tea? I’ve always found lavender eases the mind…”

“Thanks,” Jiro repeated, “That would be nice.”

Yaoyorozu nodded, trying to smile a little wider again, and then wandered off to return to her own food, sitting by Uraraka. Shinso didn’t really feel like interacting much with the others; he felt rather out of place, here in the hero course without Midoriya. So, after hovering in the middle of the room for a moment, he ended up locating a seat beside Todoroki, who had been alone, as far away from everyone else as he could get. Jiro followed him, and Todoroki didn’t

protest when the two of them sat down beside him.

They ate in silence. The curry was far better than the muck they'd conjured up back at the summer camp, but Shinso barely acknowledged the taste. The warmth was nice though.

"Hey, has everyone finished with their rooms now?" Mina called out as Shinso finished his meal.

"I still have some work to do," Todoroki admitted quietly. Come to think of it, Shinso *had* heard an awful racket from Todoroki's room for most of the day. He'd had to turn up his music to drown it out.

"Just Todoroki then?" Mina supposed, glancing around, but no one else seemed to protest. "Awesome! How about we go and have a peek at everyone's decorating skills later?"

"I'd rather not," Shinso sighed. It felt like an invasion of privacy.

"Yeah, me neither," Jiro nodded.

"Oh, *boo,"* Mina sighed. "Come on, it'll be fun!"

"I don't mind!" Uraraka grinned.

"Yay!" Mina exclaimed, leaping to her feet from the sofa she had been perched on. "See? *Uraraka's* not moping around!"

They glared at her. How *dare* she –

Her face fell moments later, "Oh, I'm sorry I didn't –"

"Your depressive moods aren't helping anyone," scoffed *Bakugo*. His hands were in his pockets as he strolled from where they had to wash up their dishes, back towards the elevators. "It's not going to change anything."

Shinso pushed back his chair, stood up, and walked in Bakugo's path, arms crossed.

"Get out of my way," Bakugo hissed, baring his teeth like a feral animal.

"Give me one reason right now why I shouldn't break your nose," Shinso growled.

"Hey! What the hell, Shinso?!" called out the electrically charged

Kaminari from across the room.

“I’m going to be your classmate for the next two and a half years, so I’m going to make this very clear, right from the start,” Shinso began, not moving an inch. “I don’t like you – or anything that you stand for.”

“Um, guys –” Uraraka tried to interject.

“– I never have and I never will,” Shinso scowled.

Bakugo narrowed his red eyes, glaring daggers right back at him.

“Hey, what brought this on?!” called out Kirishima, putting his half-cleaned plate on the side as he cautiously made his way towards the two of them, ready to step in if need be.

“How long did it take for you to get Deku to spill rubbish about me?” Bakugo questioned, shoving his hands in his pockets.

“About a week,” Shinso admitted. “Not long after he figured out he wasn’t the Quirkless loser you’ve been labelling him as his entire life. Don’t you *dare* call him by that name.”

“I don’t understand – who’s Deku?” frowned Mina.

“You’re talking about Midoriya, right?” supposed Kirishima. “Guys, what happened really sucked, but we shouldn’t be arguing over –”

“You left him behind,” Shinso snarled.

Bakugo flinched, “He *told* me to –”

“And you listened!” he exclaimed. “Now he’s gone.”

“Please, let’s not blame each other for this,” begged Uraraka. “It’s just making things worse.”

Shinso balled his hands into fists. “No, you don’t understand. *None* of you have *any idea* t-that all of this is *your fault!”*

“Don’t take it out on me!” Bakugo yelled, “*You* weren’t there when the villains tried to disintegrate his *freaking face!”*

“But you *were!* And you did nothing to stop it!”

When Bakugo hesitated, Shinso knew he had been right.

“Just like you did nothing to stop Midoriya from becoming mute in the first place!” Shinso shouted, pointing at him with a shaking finger in accusation.

“That bastard’s mental health problems were *not* on *me!”* Bakugo leered, stepping a little closer to Shinso.

Shinso glared down at him – yeah, he was taller and was *very* pleased by that fact.

Kirishima, by this point, had decided enough was enough. He put a hand on Bakugo’s shoulder, trying to convince him to back away. “Please, guys,” he said. “It’s the first night – let’s not get off on the wrong foot.”

“Yeah, too late for that,” Shinso glared, folding his arms again.

“I get that there was more between you and Midoriya than you’ve ever really mentioned, Bakugo,” Kirishima continued. “But maybe now’s not the time to explain.”

“No, come on – why don’t you tell us, *Kacchan?”*

Bakugo lunged forwards, only held back by Kirishima’s firm grip, “CALL ME THAT AGAIN AND I *SWEAR* I’LL –”

“What?! Blow up in my face?! Chuck me off a rooftop – or should I save you the effort and go take a *swan dive* myself?!” Shinso yelled back at him.

Bakugo wavered.

“Yeah! I know about *everything* – not that he said much, because he never did! But it was easy enough to figure it out!” he barked. “That you grew up together – that you used him as your freaking *punching bag* just because he didn’t have the power to fight back! I know that your entire middle school class joined in on that little *game* – that he fell silent in hopes that you would leave him alone! And then it got worse and worse and suddenly, he couldn’t speak *at all!”*

Shinso was vaguely aware of Kirishima backing away from Bakugo a little – of the rest of the class staring, wide eyed at the interaction – of Uraraka’s eyes, wide with a sudden realisation of sorts – or of Jiro burying her face in her hands, clearly sobbing again as Yaoyorozu collapsed into the chair beside her to comfort her.

“It’s *your fault* he never found his Quirk!” Shinso continued to thunder. “*Your fault* he fell mute in the first place!”

He didn’t bother holding back the tears that pricked at his eyes. His voice was hoarse and sore as he screamed, but he didn’t care anymore.

“– That he thought he’d never amount to anything and that he was the *worthless, useless Deku* that *you* made him out to be! *You* were the one who told him to go and *commit suicide!”*

Silence engulfed them. No one said a word. They all stared at Bakugo as Shinso brought his past crashing down around him.

Shinso let out a small laugh, “He said it would really pull the rug out from underneath your *hero plans* if he ever did it – which was the main reason why he didn’t.”

“*Screw you,”* Bakugo snarled, his body trembling with emotion. Shinso wasn’t quite sure which emotion it was.

“Nah, I’m enjoying screwing with *you,”* Shinso replied with equal venom. “I suppose the only reason I haven’t punched your face in *yet* is because I haven’t had the opportunity. And I haven’t said any of this to the teachers because Midoriya thought you’d be an *amazing hero* and he’d mad if I did anything to mess that up whilst he was gone. So, I would suggest watching your back.”

He turned on his heel and began to march towards the stairs – he couldn’t bear the thought of standing in the elevator and waiting for it to close.

“Hey, wait…”

Shinso hesitated, turning again to look back at Bakugo.

“Deku…” he faltered at the name, “during the Sports Festival – it was the first time he’d spoken to me in years. But he said… That I’d spent my whole life being called a hero – whilst *you* were called a villain.”

Shinso frowned, where was he going with this?

“And he told me that they’d got it the wrong way around.”

He blinked. Midoriya really said that?

Bakugo grasped the top of his black shirt, bundling it up in his fist. “And when I was with the villains – all I could think about was

that…"

Was he… was he actually *crying?*

"And that maybe he was right!" his voice cracked. "He was right! And what am I supposed to *do?!* He's gone – and All Might's gone; he's retired; lost his power – and that's all on me, huh?!"

Shinso wasn't sure what to say – no one was.

"Well SCREW YOU!" Bakugo yelled, "Because there's *NOTHING* I CAN DO ABOUT IT! I can't change what happened! And you can't either! *No one can."*

Shinso wavered for a moment more, before turning back to the stairs, hanging his head as he climbed, one hand on the banister, and the other on the feather pendant by his chest.

Although he hated to admit it, Bakugo had been right. There was nothing he could do at the moment. All this shouting and screaming served no purpose. It wasn't like he could suddenly *not* feel sad. But he didn't have to drag everyone else down with him.

Shinso collapsed onto his bed, staring at his corkboard of photos again, and at Siren, asleep in her nest. She had been pulling out her feathers again – they were everywhere.

He cast his mind back to the very first conversation he'd ever had aloud with Midoriya. He'd imprinted it in his brain.

"You must be crazy to only want to speak to the person who can brainwash you if you do."

"I-I can deal with crazy," Midoriya had said in his quiet, raspy voice.

"Good," Shinso laughed, "Because it's only going to get worse from here, I promise you that."

"I'll hold you to that promise."

Shinso was crying again now. But he just closed his eyes and smiled.

"I promise," he said into his pillow. "*I promise…*

“You better be out there somewhere, Midoriya. Because we’ve only just begun.”

He glanced at his alarm clock – it was nowhere near late enough to go to bed.

But then he frowned, and after a moment’s thought, he pulled his phone from his back pocket.

He couldn’t reach Midoriya – not at the summer camp nor at Kamino. He couldn’t reach out for him physically. But maybe, just maybe, Midoriya might still be able to hear him.

Shinso tapped a contact on his phone and brought it to his ear.

“Hello?”

“Um, hey – it’s Shinso…”

“*Excuse me, who?”*

Shinso sighed, “*Raven?”*

“*Ooohh! Yeah, yeah – I knew that. I totally knew that.”*

“Of course, you did. Sorry, you’re probably pretty busy at the moment.”

“*No, it’s alright. How… How are you holding up?”*

“Um, yeah… Ok, I guess.”

“*Good, good… How’s the dorms?”*

“It’s been… interesting, to say the least.”

“I’m going to take that as a positive. So, how can I help you, Raven?”

“Well, I guess you’ve got a bit of a blank space on Tuesdays and Thursdays now?”

“*Ha… yeah, you could say that.”*

“Um, so, remember you asked about meeting Owl back along?”

“*Yeah…?”*

“What would you say to me dragging her along next Tuesday

evening?"

The woman on the other side of the phone fell quiet. All Shinso could hear was the panicked rustling of paper for a good minute.

"*Ask your teachers and it's a done deal!"* she suddenly called out.

Shinso grinned, "Thanks, Aozora."

"You call me if you need someone to talk to, ok? That used to be my job, you know."

"Ok, I'll bear it in mind."

"Do you… want to keep talking now?"

Shinso hesitated, "About what?"

"*Anything – anything at all."*

He glanced back across his room, "What do you know about canary moulting seasons?"

Chapter End Notes

Art time!

(Trigger warnings for the first four with increasing intensity XD)

SunsetAnimations drew a depiction of what Canary's injury might look like

littlemusic…meiyou had the same idea, with some bloodstained feathers whilst they were at it

Thelovypop17 did it too and this is *so good yet so painful*

And then I got inspired – and it was Halloween so it counted as a Halloween-y thing!

The Action Plan

Chapter Notes

> Warning – we will be delving into season 4 spoilers of the anime in this chapter. The episode concerning this is already out, and you don't have to have watched it for any of this to make sense, hopefully.
>
> For this story to work the way I wanted it to, I did decide to jumble up the orders of *some* events a little. It doesn't affect the overall storyline. Any major events still happen at pretty much the same point. So, from now on, we will be getting a mix of season 4 and season 3 bits and pieces. Hopefully, manga spoilers will no longer be manga spoilers by the time that bit has arrived, but that might not happen – you have been warned.
>
> On another note, thank you *so much* for all your positive comments on the last chapter – it really made my day :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Siren's human was missing.

There was something wrong with the air when Siren collapsed. When she awoke – it was gone. She thought that would be the end of that story, but that was not to be. Her human's mum came and picked her up from the strange place she'd found herself in – with white walls and shiny, metal cages. She was quite happy to be back with that human. She had to be on her list of top ten humans.

But she seemed… sad. Which wasn't good at all. Siren tried to cheer her up with her singing, which *usually* helped – but it just seemed to make her face leak more water, which couldn't have been a good thing.

She took Siren home, and Siren was quick to fly across the house to her room. Her human lived there too, because she was kind enough to share it with him. But… it was dark inside. That wasn't right – the miniature sun should be alight in the middle of the room unless her human was sleeping. She pecked at the white thing which made it day

inside again, but her human didn't seem to be asleep at all. In fact, his nest was empty and his bags were all on it – untouched.

Siren perched by *her* nest. Maybe her human was hiding – how silly of him. So, she hopped over to her bell and pecked at it. It made a very satisfying ringing noise that often succeeded in making her human wake up or come and check on her.

However, after persistent ringing for far longer than usual, only the Mum human appeared at the doorway.

Siren stopped, cocking her head to one side as she tweeted at her in confusion.

She sniffed, "He's gone, Siren."

Siren turned her head from the empty room and back to Mum human. She chirped at her again. This didn't make sense – her human wasn't allowed to go anywhere without her. Where did he go?

"The villains took him a-away," she sobbed, falling to her knees. "And we d-don't know if he'll *ever* come b-back…"

Siren sat there for a moment. No – this wasn't right, not at all. Her human was… in danger? Then why wasn't she with him?!

She took one glance at the open window and took off. She *had* to find him!

But… she couldn't.

The little green bird flew as far as her wings could carry her. She visited UA – the radio show – the beach – the dance studio. Everywhere across the city that her human could possibly have gone to – but he was nowhere to be found.

She was tired; she was hungry.

She flew home and Mum human cried again when she saw her.

But Siren didn't have the heart to sing to cheer her up. Siren didn't have enough cheer to go around.

Mum human took Siren back to the place with the white walls – she didn't know why. Maybe it was because she wasn't singing anymore. But she wasn't sick. And she wasn't mute either. Siren could sing if she wanted to. But it was just so much easier to fade into the background

– to not make a fuss or make things worse. That was what female canaries were *supposed* to do. They were quiet.

Siren was with her human's friend now – the purple one.

He was sad too; she could tell.

But Siren was a little happier now she was with him. She was in the know – she'd met all of her human's humans and was still working on the names for a lot of them.

She had spent the last few days in a new place for the humans at school. They had all their nests close to each other, which was nice to see. And they all said hello to her a lot and gave her lots of food. She wasn't in the mood to eat much of it – but she appreciated the gesture.

They were struggling to settle in though. Siren's second favourite human – the tired, purple one – had rightfully shouted lots at the angry human that Siren *didn't* like. But now everyone was even sadder and seemed to be rather confused as to who to talk to and who to comfort. It was a big mess of emotions and Siren wasn't too sure how to help.

However, Siren's second favourite human was now spending a lot of time with the *other* purple human (you see her problem here? It's awfully difficult to differentiate between the two when they're *both* purple) – the girl one. They were both sad – but they were slightly *less* so when they were able to do it *together*.

But Siren was quite proud of them – like they were her new chicks. Because they'd finally figured out a way to stop huddling together in their nest, being sad – and learn how to fly and fix this problem themselves, in the best way they could. There was even a soft smile on their faces as they were escorted out of UA and towards the train station – and Siren couldn't wait to see what happened next.

But if there was ever the slightest chance Siren could sink her talons into the skull of whoever did this to her human –

She would.

Fourteen days since the kidnapping

Jiro had been rather shocked when Shinso offered her the chance to feature alongside him on the radio that following week. She had been trying to get her head around what special moves she could possibly accomplish before the upcoming provisional licensing exam when he asked her. This was a welcome break.

If her mind wasn't set on a task, it just drifted back to Canary. So, she had been keeping herself busy – too busy. Even Momo had said she needed to take some time off or something. Yes, going to the radio station would take her grieving mind once again back to her missing friend, but she felt less hopeless this time. Shinso had pointed out something to her –

There was a good chance Canary would be able to hear them.

"See you guys later," Jiro waved to the others gathered in the common room.

"We're gonna keep the radio on!" Mina called back enthusiastically. "Have fun!"

But before she walked out the door, she hesitated, catching Bakugo's gaze. He sat on his phone in the corner of the room – earphones in.

Jiro wasn't sure what to think of him anymore… Before, she'd seen him as a guy with a personality as explosive as his Quirk; someone who didn't really know how to interact with others or deal with *friends.* He was powerful and had an admirable drive. All of which were still true. But now she could see another side to him – something which had been plain as day, yet so hard to see. Jiro didn't know if it was something he was ashamed of; something he regretted, or if he'd yet to come to terms with what he had done to Canary; what that meant to him.

Right now, there was just too much going on in Jiro's head to add that mess to the mix. So, she kept her distance, siding with Shinso, who seemed to hate the guy more than Jiro thought it was possible to hate someone who wasn't actually a villain.

Or maybe that was the point.

Shinso was quiet on the train to the radio station. So, Jiro was too.

She turned back to her phone – which was on her social media account, growing in popularity as time went by.

Aozora – who seemed to be the one who held the whole radio show business together singlehandedly, had been in contact with Jiro over the last few days. The blue skinned woman had video called her after class and given her a crash course on how to improve her social media presence. Somehow, the conversation had morphed into one concerning the difficulties of getting makeup for someone with a rather blue complexion. Aozora was nice to talk to. She just had a way with making your worries disappear – and was a brilliant distraction from Jiro's troubles. She must have been a real lifesaver for Canary, and Jiro looked forward to actually meeting her.

"Here we are," Shinso sighed as he pushed open the glass door to the radio station. It was completely blacked out from the outside, but as they walked in, she could see that it wasn't the case from the *inside*, where the entire wall appeared to be completely ordinary glass.

There were two receptionists sitting by a long desk at the far end of the empty entrance hall. "Hey, Raven!" the guy called out. "Nice to see you again!"

"You too," Shinso said in reply as he leant against the desk. "I can't remember – we need to sign in, right?"

"It's ok, I've got it covered," the girl receptionist nodded. "And, who's your friend?"

"Oh, I'm Jiro," she introduced herself. "Owl."

"Wait, *you're* Owl?" the guy questioned, leaning forwards so he was uncomfortably close to her face. He narrowed his eyes and scrutinised her strangely for a second. "Nice to meet you!" he then announced, falling back into his chair again with a smile.

"Err, you too, I guess?" Jiro said with a raised eyebrow.

Shinso rolled his eyes, "Ignore him, everyone here is crazy."

"This is true," the girl nodded. "Oh, by the way, Aozora said to give you this." Across the table, the woman slipped an obnoxiously bright orange card.

Shinso frowned as he picked it up, and then blinked when he saw the name *Raven* written across it. "Is this a –"

“A key card to the building, yep,” she nodded. “I’m not sure if you have as much access as Canary. My suggestion would be to just click every single button on the elevator and see where it actually lets you go.”

Siren seemed incredibly intrigued by the card. Maybe she thought it was Canary’s at first, because she hopped down from Shinso’s shoulder and onto his wrist to stare at it a little closer for a moment, before appearing visibly dejected, and flying back up to her usual perch.

“I’ll bear that in mind,” Shinso nodded.

And so, after signing a piece of paper that could very much of just sold her soul, because Jiro didn’t bother reading it, Shinso led her towards the elevator, used his new card to grant him access, and took her all the way up to the thirteenth floor.

“There they are!” called out Aozora with a smile that was not nearly as creepy as Jiro knew it could be from Shinso’s descriptions, “How are you, my little hero fledglings?!”

“Could be worse,” was Shinso’s reply.

“That’s the spirit!” Aozora said cheerfully. “And it’s lovely to meet you properly, Owl!” she grinned.

Jiro smiled the best she could in return, holding out a hand for her to shake. But Aozora ignored it and threw herself into a hug with the smaller girl.

“If you ever need to talk again, you just give me a call, ok?” she whispered loud enough for Jiro to hear with her Quirk.

Jiro swallowed the lump in her throat as she hugged her back.

“Now,” Aozora sighed as she let Jiro go, “I asked you guys to come half an hour early for a good reason. You didn’t have the key card to get in through the back door and I didn’t want you to have to deal with the press swarming around outside the front because they know that *Owl’s* making her first appearance,” she explained. “They’ve started to calm down over the last week now that they’ve had their fill of swarming us to see if they can get even the littlest snippet of information about Canary’s disappearance. Anyways… make yourself at home!” She indicated to the collection of sofas around them, in the waiting room outside of the main studio, seemingly hidden behind the

blinds covering a thick, soundproof window along the far wall. They did a good job; Jiro couldn't hear anything at all from Present Mic, who must have been still chatting away to his invisible audience back there.

Shinso didn't wait a moment before collapsing into one of the larger sofas in the corner of the room, the one underneath the open window to the dimming world outside. Jiro faltered before perching beside him. She followed his gaze to the nearby armchair, completely covered in unused cushions and blankets.

"That's the canary nest," Shinso explained with a slight grin.

Jiro looked back and, like she had suddenly learnt teleportation, Siren was sitting in the middle of the chair. The sight of the tiny creature in amongst the overwhelming pile of cushions made Jiro smile too.

A few minutes passed where no one said anything at all. Jiro was convinced Siren had fallen asleep, and perhaps that Shinso had followed suit. Jiro just stared at the animated silhouette of Present Mic, behind those blinds inside the actual radio studio.

Aozora was the one who broke that silence, "So, Owl," she begun, getting up from her chosen sofa to plonk herself down next to Jiro, "how's life at the dorms? All Raven would give me was that it was *interesting."*

Jiro scoffed, "Yeah, that's certainly a word I would use to describe it…"

"Come on then!" Aozora said, nudging her with her elbow gently, "Give me some *details.* I do like to know the gossip, and I have a feeling you're the same."

"With my Quirk, that's not really something I can avoid," Jiro replied, twirling one of her earphone jacks around her finger. "But yeah – err, well, I guess there's a lot of tensions at the moment."

"You can say that again," Shinso moaned – so, he *was* awake.

"You were the one who *started* it," Jiro acknowledged, shaking her head in disbelief.

"Nah, I just made it worse."

"What'd he make worse?" Aozora pressed.

Jiro and Shinso exchanged glances, and then both replied at exactly the same time, “Bakugo.”

“The explosion kid?” Aozora confirmed, raising an eyebrow.

“The very same,” Jiro nodded. She continued after a deep sigh, “He and Canary have a… *history* – as it turns out. And Shinso decided to bring it into the limelight and everyone kind of had a break down over it and now no one’s getting along with anyone.”

Aozora pouted, unsure of what to say, “Yes that does make for an… *interesting* dynamic.”

Jiro nodded; Shinso didn’t bother saying anything at all.

“I won’t pry further,” Aozora wisely decided. “So, what were we talking about last night before I had to go?”

“Blue makeup?”

“No, after that…”

“Oh – Canary’s arsenal.”

“*That’s it,”* Aozora grinned, snapping her fingers. “Did you ever get a copy from Raven?”

“Not since last night.”

“Tell me *how* first,” Shinso groaned as he slumped over the arm of the sofa.

“Let me try,” Aozora offered, “Give me your phones.”

“I don’t trust you with my phone,” Shinso said.

Aozora gasped in mock offense, “*Rude.”*

Aozora had this incredible talent to make others smile. It was strange, considering how unsettling her own could be at times. She was just so easy to talk to. You could slip into a conversation with her on almost *anything* – and she could make it run through the time like the two of you were old friends. Jiro’s worries simply washed away, left forgotten in the back of her mind as they continued to babble on about utter nonsense – right up until the time when Present Mic threw open the door to his radio studio and invited them inside.

Jiro hadn't seen Present Mic much since the summer camp – not even since school started up again. He seemed like his usual self at first glance – outrageous hair, a shockingly loud voice, and a brilliant, white smile. But look a little closer – and Jiro could see through that mask of his. He was putting on a show, like he always did. Being happy and smiley; playing the character of *Present Mic* – rather than *himself*. And the real him? He was probably feeling as bad as them. But he was keeping busy, like Jiro had been. Keep moving forwards and hope that everything would turn out ok. The problem was, this wasn't exactly a puzzle with a clear solution to work towards. There was nothing they could realistically *do* to get Canary back safe.

Except, maybe this –

Put Your Hands Up Radio

Thursday 18:30

Present Mic's Radio Show!

PRESENT MIC: Goood evening my lovey listeners! How are we all today? Good? – Good! Now, let me introduce to you our – not one, but *two* – co-hosts for the rest of today! You all know – *Raven!*

RAVEN: Hey.

PRESENT MIC: And someone *else* you all know – but this is her very first time on the show… Welcome *Owl!*

OWL: Hi, thank you for having me.

PRESENT MIC: No, thank *you!* Raven and Owl are both *hero course students* from UA! How's it been so far?

OWL: The course itself? Pretty great – I've made tons of new friends – not including Raven, of course –

RAVEN: Thanks.

OWL: – and the teachers are really great too!

RAVEN: Except for our English teacher.

OWL: Yeah, that guy's annoying.

A moment of silence

PRESENT MIC: It should be illegal to have the two of you in the same room. Your combined sass is *criminal* – that was so uncalled for!

RAVEN: Which is precisely why it had to be done.

PRESENT MIC: *Well then* – go on Raven, you only recently transferred to Owl's class, how's life at the new dorms?!

RAVEN: Interesting.

OWL: Why is that always your go-to word to describe this?

RAVEN: We literally just had this conversation.

OWL: There are other words!

RAVEN: Alright then, the hero course itself is kind of hardcore for someone as far behind as I am; it's really exactly what I need at the moment. The *dorm life*, however, makes for – how did we describe it earlier? Oh, yeah – an *interesting dynamic.*

OWL: That's just because you're a loner who refuses to make any friends.

RAVEN: Yeah, true.

PRESENT MIC: But you have *each other!*

RAVEN: No, she has too many emotions and is far too nosy.

OWL: He's a bad influence – he drinks death syrup at midnight.

RAVEN: *Coffee.*

OWL: First of all, I don't know *what* it is but it definitely isn't *coffee*. And secondly, at *midnight?*

RAVEN: My point stands – you are nosy.

OWL: You're an eyesore.

RAVEN: Thanks.

PRESENT MIC: Is your entire friendship just built on sarcasm?

RAVEN: Yep.

OWL: Absolutely.

Present Mic hesitates

PRESENT MIC: Now I can't tell if they're being sarcastic or not – *anyways…*

OWL: Doesn't Canary give us a random fact at this point in the show or something?

RAVEN: I am not that knowledgeable.

OWL: Yeah, I know – but you spend more time with him so *surely* something's been ingrained in there. Or is it *that* blank?

RAVEN: …That was a pun, wasn't it?

OWL: I have no idea what you're talking about.

PRESENT MIC: Go on! Give us a random fact then!

RAVEN: I can give you a *debatable* fact.

PRESENT MIC: Fire away!

RAVEN: Owls are good singers.

Faint scuffling can be heard

OWL: WHY IS THAT A DEBATABLE FACT?

RAVEN: De-bat-able

OWL: No, no, you're saying it wrong: Deba-table

PRESENT MIC: We're getting off track here – *why is it deba-table?*

A brief moment of silence

PRESENT MIC: I didn't mean to say it like that – *what have you done?*

RAVEN: God's work.

OWL: *Moving on –*

RAVEN: She sang with Canary and the summer camp and it was really good.

OWL: NO! NO, IT WASN'T – WE DO NOT SPEAK OF THIS!

RAVEN: Now, everyone bombard her social media and ask her to sing.

OWL: DO NOT DO THAT!

RAVEN: Someone is being louder than Cockatoo – I never thought I'd see the day.

PRESENT MIC: SPEAKING OF MUSIC!

RAVEN: …You did that on purpose.

PRESENT MIC: WHY DON'T WE PLAY A SONG?!

RAVEN: *I have regrets.*

PRESENT MIC: SEE YOU AFTER THIS!

"*Shinso!"* Jiro cried, flushing red and aiming an earphone jack at him.

He ducked and rolled off his chair, now using it as a shield. "I have regrets," he repeated.

"DAMN RIGHT YOU DO!" she exclaimed furiously, "What did you say that for?!"

"Because you should sing," Shinso explained, sitting back on his chair and finally taking off his headphones. "Like Canary used to do."

Jiro blinked, the red fading from her face as she hesitated.

"Aozora told me that she thought one of the reasons why you wanted to come on here was because you thought Canary might be able to hear you," Present Mic interjected solemnly.

The two looked over to him. His smile had faded from that fake one he wore, stretching from ear to ear despite the circumstance. The one he sported now was just soft and perhaps sympathetic, admiring their determination to help their friend.

"I've been considering that possibility too," he continued, tapping at the muted microphone before him. "If you want to sing, you're more than welcome to."

Jiro bit her lip. Sing? On the radio? Was she really good enough to do something like that?

She glanced around the room. Shinso and Present Mic had been woefully serious. And it wasn't like Shinso to be serious around her – she knew he wasn't being sarcastic for once. But then her gaze fell to the blue skinned woman, leaning against the open door to the radio studio.

Jiro's wobbly smile grew wider, and she nodded towards Aozora.

Now Jiro understood what Shinso meant about her smile being so creepy.

She nodded back to her, "Then let's do this."

Out of all the places he'd been dragged over those past few weeks, this had to be the worst.

The lower half of his face was wrapped in bandages, covered loosely by a cheap, black surgical mask. Despite that, he often found himself coughing on the dust in the air. At least it was better than the mask he'd made out of a birdseed bag, back at the summer camp.

Yes, this was Midoriya. He was still here; still alive; still waiting.

He'd been counting the days and, since night had now fallen, indicated by how much light poured in through the little windows, high in the top of the warehouse, and the gaping holes in the battered ceiling, it had now been almost exactly fourteen days since his capture. Eleven since he last saw his friends – but not since he last *heard* them.

It was cold, for a late summer's night. He wrapped his arms around himself. At least the villains had been courteous enough to grant him this old, worn hoody, coloured a depressing grey. The sounds of his friends on the radio were warming enough, though.

"*E-bayy-a-ble –"* he grimaced and tried again. He couldn't make the '*l*' sound properly this time; it was frustrating. Who'd have thought trying to say the word *debatable* would be so difficult? Some words were certainly easier than others, but he was working on it.

If he ever got out of here, he'd work on some proper speech therapy, that was for sure.

The main issue surrounding the whole – *getting out* predicament, was Kurogiri, the warp-gate villain. He'd managed to break out a total of five times, if he didn't include the Kamino attack, and for four of them, he'd walked straight into a portal that appeared out of nowhere

– taking him right back to where he'd started. What sickened him the most was the *third* time he'd escaped, just before they left for this warehouse – that was the one time where Kurogiri wasn't involved. Midoriya had managed to get all the way to a police station. He was just about to step inside when Shigaraki appeared, looped an arm around his shoulders and marched him away. Midoriya knew he was perfectly happy to disintegrate him right there on the spot – so yelling for help wouldn't have done anything good for him. Shigaraki could have gone after any of the passers-by just for the hell of it after he was finished with Midoriya – and could still have disappeared before anyone, just out of sight in the police station, could have leapt into action.

Out of all the villains there, he hated Shigaraki the most. Despite being a real pain, Kurogiri wasn't actually that bad. *Toga* had to be second on Midoriya's list, with Spinner as the third. Mainly because Toga liked him way more than any of the others, and Spinner *despised* him with a burning passion. Probably because it was Midoriya's fault Stain had been arrested.

A lot of the villains there seemed to be devoted followers of Stains ideals, despite Midoriya knowing that Stain was never a part of the League – and Shigaraki wasn't that fond of the man himself anyway. It wasn't like Midoriya could *tell* them that though…

"Stop making those pathetic noises, would you?" groaned Magne as she leant against what Midoriya was quite sure was a rather large magnet, hidden under a greying cloth.

Midoriya glared at her from across the room. At least it wasn't Dabi – he was always far less tolerant.

The scarred man was also an admirer of Stain, but for some reason, didn't hate Midoriya for it. Or maybe he did, and just couldn't be bothered to show it. He was… an odd character. Midoriya found it hard to read him. He was certainly frightening – Midoriya knew he would kill without much thought; he seemed to enjoy it… in fact… But he was good with caring for Midoriya's injuries; skilled with the bandages, which made sense, considering all his visible scars.

What *didn't* make sense to Midoriya, was *why* they kept him there.

For the first week, they'd been persistent in their attempts to make Midoriya join their number; give up his ambition for heroics. But eventually they had realised that there was no hope – Midoriya's

ideals would not budge.

What was the point? He understood the whole, taking his voice thing, in some horrific, sadistic kind of way. But he felt like they really *were* keeping him like some kind of pet at this point – like a trophy. He would ask them the point of it all – but he *couldn't*, which was as frustrating as anything.

"Head up, Canary," said Compress, fiddling with his mask as he stepped into view behind Shigaraki.

Midoriya just shrunk away instead, leaning up against the dust covered, metal crate that one of his wrists was stubbornly chained to.

The villains were gathering. He didn't know what was going on, but it must have been important, because Toga turned off the radio as she skipped towards him, cutting off the upbeat song and filling the warehouse with an echoing silence.

It was broken moments later, with the noise of the door screeching open.

Twice was there, and alongside him, a stranger, wearing a mask that could have been taken from a plague doctor.

"Well now, you brought us a pretty big catch, huh, Twice?" leered Shigaraki, who had leant against the wall not far from Midoriya, as Toga slid down to sit beside him; he didn't bother shuffling away.

"You think so?" the stranger replied, his voice revealing that he was eerily comfortable in this environment. "Strange, coming from you – the League of Villains." He glanced across the warehouse, zeroing in on Midoriya within a few seconds. His eyes narrowed.

"He's the young head of the Shie Hassaikai – what you would call… Yakuza," Shigaraki explained to his goons.

Midoriya supposed he was one of them – if not unintentionally. But he didn't like the look of this guy. At least he knew *these* villains – and Dabi wasn't around, an enigma as always. Spinner was nowhere to be seen either.

Toga wasn't acting as overly enthusiastic as usual, which was a nice change. She insisted on being close to Midoriya though, whilst Compress sat on the crate above them, explaining to her (and Midoriya too, presumably) what this guy stood for – and what that

meant for them.

“Yakuza are, frankly, obsolete,” Compress sighed in conclusion, “an endangered species.”

“I suppose that’s true,” the stranger agreed. “But I don’t seem to be the only one who’s an *endangered species* around here.”

Midoriya dared to hold his gaze as the other villains slowly turned to him.

“Alongside the fall of All Might and All for One – all the media talks about is *Canary*,” he continued. “I thought you’d killed him.”

“We still have uses for him,” Shigaraki explained.

Midoriya just growled. He didn’t wilt under Shigaraki’s hard stare this time, and just glared back defiantly.

“But do have an actual *plan?”*

Shigaraki pushed away from the wall, pulling his *real* hands from his pockets with the hint of a threat, “Watch your tongue –” he glanced back at Midoriya, “–and your tone. Don’t want to end up like *Canary.”*

“You took away his voice,” the stranger realised immediately, connecting the dots without much effort at all. “Now what? Let him go? What other purpose could you possibly have? There’s no way he’ll join you; surely you’ve realised that?” He sighed, pulling at the thin, white gloves that covered his own hands. “You have goals – but they’re simply wishes without a clear way to actually act them out.”

“I have a plan,” Shigaraki leered. “I will turn this hero society to dust – and it starts with *Canary*. He may not join us – but we have ways of making the world *think* that he has.”

Midoriya’s eyes widened – what did he mean by that?!

“And then what?” the beaked man scoffed, taking a few steps closer to them. “Will the world will simply fall at your feet? No, it won’t. Meanwhile, *my* plan is guaranteed to make a stir. Follow me; make *me* your new leader, and I’ll show you a path to that *wish* of yours.”

“I thought you came here to *join us*,” said Shigaraki through gritted teeth. “Twice, you brought him here without even knowing what he *wanted.”*

As Twice took a couple steps back in a slight panic, the brave villain continued with his argument, “You may have been All for One’s so called *successor* – but you won’t do well to follow in his footsteps; become the leader of the shadows. But you have no idea how to even *be* one. You had the Hero Killer, Stain, by your side – Muscular too. Both of which were taken down by that little *kid* right there.”

Midoriya gulped, his heart beating fast and hard against his ribcage as the man pointed in his direction.

“You couldn’t manage a few crazy people and all you got in return was the broken *husk* of a wannabe hero.”

Something snapped in Midoriya. He clambered to his feet quickly, pulling against the chain that held him in place, his fists balled in anger.

‘I’m not dead yet.’

– Was what he would have said.

The stranger let out a small laugh, “Not quite given up yet? That’s good.”

“What do you want?” Shigaraki snapped, not tearing his eyes away from the intruder.

“In order to execute my design, I need money,” he explained without hesitation. “Unfortunately, there aren’t many people out there willing to invest in some, *obsolete*, small time Yakuza. But *your* group, on the other hand, has widespread name recognition. Join me – and I’ll make it worth your while. I’ll show you exactly how to use what you have to make your wishes a reality.”

A moment of silence passed as Toga got to her feet beside Midoriya. He could *feel* the tension in the air.

“*Leave,”* was all Shigaraki stated, before one of his followers leapt into action.

Magne pulled that cloth off her support item as she charged towards him, “We didn’t band together to serve under somebody like *you!”* she cried, yelling about what this group meant to her as she used her Quirk to pull the stranger towards her, ready to smash his head in without a second thought.

– but she never got that far.

A white glove was left discarded on the floor. With only the slightest touch of the intruder's skin on her own – *she was gone.*

"Just remember, you made the first move!" he cried.

Midoriya stumbled backwards, his back pressed against the crate as his whole body trembled at the sight of what lay before him.

The floor was red.

It dripped from the ceiling – *blood.* All that remained.

"Ugh – I'm *filthy* now!" and it was all over *him.* "That's why I *hate* the aftermath."

"No!" Toga exclaimed, her mouth agape at the scene.

Midoriya didn't know what to *think* as he saw the murder – so abrupt – so meaningless – right before his eyes. And then Compress jumped into action, desperate to use his Quirk and imprison the attacker – but a golden bullet shot from a hole in the ceiling imbedded itself in his arm.

The arm itself – was obliterated moments later.

Toga pulled a knife from her sleeve. It was on impulse that Midoriya reached out and pulled her back.

Shigaraki took her place – a deadly hand outstretched towards the stranger. There was another bullet – but this time, it missed. Instead of the dangerous man turning to dust and crumbling pitifully to the floor – another appeared to step in between them, screaming in pain as he met his end.

"You should have just *started* with this," Shigaraki hissed as yet *more* villains burst through the wall.

"That was a close one, Overhaul!" one exclaimed.

Overhaul – that was his name.

Midoriya felt his whole body shaking as he stepped back and slid down the crate once again, falling to the floor as he gripped the corners of the metal in a failing attempt to ground himself.

“A death on both sides,” were the words from Overhaul’s mouth that brought Midoriya back to reality. He had been staring at the *red*. “Killing each other isn’t productive.”

The League was yelling at each other now – all keen to fight back as the intruding group started to back away, but their leader – Shigaraki – just stood there and stared.

Overhaul hesitated at the door. “Why don’t we strike a deal?” he said.

“You’re crazier than me if you think we’ll listen to *you*,” Toga snarled. Midoriya didn’t think he’d ever seen her act so serious.

Overhaul let out another chuckle. “Perhaps – but you might have noticed the apparent lack of your man’s Quirk.”

“*What did you do?”* Compress barely managed, shaking in Twice’s arms as he barely acknowledged the loss of his own.

One of Overhaul’s men spoke up, holding a black pistol for all to see, “Temporary Quirk erasure; now we’re sure they work. Thanks for your contribution.”

“Here is my offer,” Overhaul continued, rubbing the blood from his hands before covering them with the gloves he had previously discarded. “Stick to your own ways to achieve your *goals*; I’ll stay out of your hair. But… if you want some of those *bullets* – a few every month, perhaps. A sort of *alliance.* I owe your side an arm, after all.”

“And in return?” Shigaraki growled, still obviously unsure of what the Yakuza group really wanted.

“*Canary.”*

Shigaraki’s red eyes met Midoriya’s frightened green for a fraction of a second.

“As I said – I need money. No one will invest in a group who has yet to make a single dent in this world. If we turn up with *him?* Well, they’ll know we mean business.”

Midoriya pulled harshly at the cuff on his wrist. He wouldn’t be a part of this – he *refused.*

He didn’t need his Quirk to fight back.

But Overhaul just huffed and turned away, “Think about it,” he said.

Over his shoulder, he tossed a pristine, white business card, which slid across the floor to Shigaraki's feet. "And call me."

It finished as quickly as it had begun.

Overhaul's gang walked away calmly, like they had just been out for an evening stroll, despite what they had left in their wake.

Compress was taken away by the others; he certainly needed medical attention.

And so, Midoriya was left behind, huddled up in the corner of the battered warehouse – stained red.

Toga was there too – sharpening her blades with a malicious look upon her face, as she waited for Kurogiri to appear to take the two of them away to a safer location.

Midoriya's trembling hand reached out for the radio.

It was red too – why was *everything red?*

Static filled his ears for a moment as he carefully adjusted the crooked antenna.

"– of the h$_{ar}$dest fig^{ht}, it's $_{tru}$e –"

Midoriya sighed when it cut to static again. He ignored the sticky, red substance that stubbornly covered one side of the little device as he picked it up and hugged it against himself. The radio was all he had left.

Eventually, the radio picked up signal again.

~Rescue – Laura Daigle~

"*I hear the whisper underneath your breath."*

Midoriya's own hitched. That wasn't the voice of just some random soul over the radio –

"*I hear you whisper you have nothing left…"*

– he *knew* this voice.

"*I will send out an army to find you –"*

It was… Jiro's…

And suddenly, he couldn't breathe.

"*– it's true, I will rescue you!"*

Tears pricked at his eyes – the shock of the events that had just passed fading away as he really came to terms with what had just happened.

"*I will* never *stop marching to reach you!"*

He choked on the air at the thought of his friends – however far away they were, waiting for him.

"*– it's true, I will rescue you!"*

He took a deep breath as he heard Jiro do the same, inhaling the dust and musk through the corners of his mask and up his nose.

"*Oh, I will rescue you…"*

He heard Jiro back away from the microphone at the end of the song. It was distant, but still audible – her stifled sob, that was.

It was that noise that sparked a new light inside of Midoriya.

He had to get out of here.

Chapter End Notes

Songs used in this chapter:

Rescue – Lauren Daigle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PugD11k3JU

Art time!

er-we-are-meant-to-be on Tumblr has blessed us with another rendition of Midoriya's injury – so trigger warning for that – but the background is just making me *cackle* XD

And **Thelovypop17** has a message for you all XD
Also, this picture represents Pop sending art to 50% of all Canary chapters, which is pretty awesome!

Then, on the other end of the spectrum, we have LeahZEEEEE from Discord, who has her first fan art as the canaries who can't sing

Finally, 101 is back with a cute Halloween emoji for Discord XD

The Fight for Freedom

Chapter Notes

I wrote the chapter.
Realised it was almost eleven thousand words long.
And split it into two.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Fifteen days since the kidnapping

“We all need to talk.”

That was Yaoyorozu, her arms folded as she pouted at her class. Everyone was in the common room at that moment, which was most likely why she had chosen *then* to begin whatever she was on about.

“About what?” was Asui’s reply.

Shinso just sighed and sunk further into his seat, staring at Siren in her nest. He had a bad feeling that, whatever it was, it involved him. It usually did.

Their vice-representative hesitated for a moment. Maybe it was because she had just assumed everyone had already guessed what she meant. Maybe it was because she was thinking through how to start this.

“…Canary.”

Jiro pulled off her headphones immediately. Uraraka peered over the back of the sofa she had claimed, already decked out in her pyjamas. Iida did the same, as he had been trying and failing to explain the maths homework that Mr Ectoplasm had set them a few days ago to her. The only one remaining was Todoroki, who had just sat down in the chair next to Shinso, a cup of coffee in hand as he slid a much

stronger one over to Shinso – he would need it to get through this.

Someone else to note, was Bakugo, who got up from his isolated seat in the corner of the room and began to walk towards the stairs up to his room.

“Bakugo – you need to stay here for this,” Yaoyorozu said seriously, giving him a look as he passed her by.

He faltered and sighed loudly, before turning around and flopping back down in the nearest available chair, one earphone hanging out as he pressed pause on whatever he was listening to on his phone.

Yaoyorozu cleared her throat, clearly a little nervous about the confrontation. “Look, it’s been over two weeks now since the kidnapping and… a-and, well – we need to sort out our friendships!”

Shinso groaned and Yaoyorozu glared daggers at him.

“You’re absolutely right!” Iida said eagerly, getting to his feet and pushing his glasses further up the bridge of his nose. His enthusiasm died quickly as he continued, “A lot of troubling events have occurred over the last two weeks, and it has severely affected the wellbeing of a lot of you, including myself, I admit. However, right now, there is nothing we can do to change the situation. What happened is, unfortunately, behind us, and all we can do is move on.”

“R-Right,” Yaoyorozu stammered, wandering slowly over to a cupboard that Shinso had seen her routing around in the day before, after he’d come back from the radio station with Jiro.

That hadn’t been a good night. The show ended on the last note of Jiro’s song, but she and Shinso stayed behind for a good hour. Iida had been right, mentally, they were *not* ok. Shinso had experienced his fair share of mental strife, but this had hit him more than he ever thought it could. He was most certainly not alone in that sense.

“So, I thought that, in the meantime, maybe we could set aside a few evenings like this to sort things out!” she suggested eagerly, bending down to route through that cupboard. “And I thought that maybe we could start with…” She turned around with a brilliant smile on her face, “board games!”

“Kill me now,” Shinso groaned quietly as he took a swig of his coffee.

Todoroki smirked.

“I-I’ve never done them before,” she continued, “but I thought it would a great way to spend some time together!”

Bakugo stood up again in another attempt to leave.

“And you’re not allowed to skip it!” she snapped coldly.

“*Watch me,”* Bakugo hissed back.

Shinso sighed. As much as he hated it, Yaoyorozu and Iida were on to something. Shinso had really ruined the friendships in this class – the least he could do was tag along in whatever mad attempts they had to salvage them. He turned to Bakugo, “What? Afraid that you’ll lose?”

Bakugo stopped in his tracks.

“Wanna bet?” he growled, turned on his heel, and marched back towards Yaoyorozu. He snatched the first board game in the pile in her arms to read the label. “These are all stupid.”

“Or maybe you’re just the stupid one.” Ok, that wasn’t Shinso’s best insult. But in the small period of time that he’d really known Bakugo, he already understood that there was one way to get his attention *properly* –

– and that was competition.

“There’s nineteen of us,” interjected Iida. “We could split the group into two halves with one judicator! Then play a series of games, with the team with the most wins at the end of the night being announced as victorious!”

“Excellent!” Yaoyorozu said eagerly. “I don’t mind being the judicator, unless you would prefer that role.”

“It’s your idea, so whatever you’d like,” Iida nodded. “Perhaps you could be so tonight, and I’ll do it next time.”

“Sounds like a plan!” Yaoyorozu really was excited about this prospect. “Ok – so, how should we split up the class?”

“I’ll choose a team, and then so will Eyebags.”

Shinso gave Bakugo a look, raising an eyebrow as he drank the rest of his coffee. “Sounds like a plan,” he said, repeating Yaoyorozu’s words.

“Um, are you sure we should –” started Yaoyorozu, probably referring

to fracturing the class even further down the middle, but Shinso personally thought this was the best way of doing it. Working together with Bakugo at this stage would probably just make things worse. He never wanted to be friends with him – not a chance. But classmates and rivals? Those were terminologies that he'd be happier resorting to. First things first, survive the night.

"I choose Kirishima," Bakugo started.

"Todoroki," Shinso said immediately after, just because he'd given him coffee and deserved a reward.

"Racoon Eyes."

"Jiro –"

"Dunce Face –"

"– I hate how we know who he's referring to," Kaminari grumbled as he wandered over to Bakugo's claimed side of the room.

It wasn't long before the class was split evenly in two.

Yaoyorozu stood in the centre of the room with her pile of board games whilst the two teams of nine perched on and around the sofas. She pulled a large, white sheet of paper from her arm, making it with her Quirk, and then pinned it up on the wall. Finally, with a marker pen that she could have taken from her pocket, or just of easily formed it with her Quirk, she drew a line down the middle, and wrote *Team Shinso* and *Team Bakugo* across the top of both sides.

"Ok!" Yaoyorozu clapped her hands and beamed.

Shinso glanced across the room at Bakugo and gave him one of his best, cruel grins. Bakugo's response was more determined, but it was most certainly an improvement.

Yaoyorozu didn't seem to notice, "What shall we do first?"

They moved Midoriya from the warehouse to a new location, of which he never really had the time to appreciate.

The atmosphere was tense and uncertain. Compress had been taken somewhere to allow him to recover from the amputation of his arm. Where? Well, Midoriya couldn't know for sure. He hoped he was ok.

Midoriya frowned, scratching at the bandages on his face. Should he be worried for the welfare of a villain? Someone who *kidnapped him*, no less…

But Midoriya was frightened.

The villains spoke in front of him of their plans, mainly because they knew that he couldn't repeat them; they didn't think as far as sign language or writing, but without being able to even *leave*, there wasn't much point in worrying.

Although Midoriya hadn't been completely sure on what they were originally aiming towards, the direction now was clear. Shigaraki had a deck of cards out before him on an old desk – and amongst them, lay Overhaul's business card.

Midoriya stared at him from across the room. His wrist had been reattached to the wall behind them, just below a window and welded in place by Dabi as soon as he'd arrived to assess the damage that had been done in his absence; he wasn't pleased.

"Are you going to do it?" questioned Toga. Midoriya wasn't sure if he was more or less scared of her now she was acting so much less… cuddly. She was sitting on a sofa that was practically falling apart as she twirled a knife between her fingers, staring at Magne's magnet, which had been cleaned and propped up against the wall.

Shigaraki looked up at Midoriya, who glared back at him, picking at the place where the chain was attached to the wall absentmindedly.

"Not quite how they want it," he replied coldly. "Dabi – get me a phone."

No disputes were made, excluding the rolling of Dabi's eyes.

He left the hideout as Shigaraki began to waltz towards Midoriya, scattering the playing cards as he went.

He grasped the front of Midoriya's hoody and pulled him to his feet. His wrist was wrenched back by the chain. It felt shorter this time.

"You should have joined us," he hissed. "We could have avoided all

this *trouble."*

'You shouldn't have taken my voice.'

– Midoriya would have said.

Instead, he just bared his teeth beneath his mask, the growl he let out and the narrowing of his eyes was enough to get his point across.

Shigaraki tossed him back to the floor roughly, yanking at his arm. The cuff was starting to chafe.

"We're not giving him away, right, Tomura?" Toga frowned, sitting up; clearly displeased by the idea.

The villain glared down at him and repeated the words Midoriya had heard far too many times over the past two weeks, "He's still an important piece."

'Important piece…' Midoriya curled up against the wall again, his shaking hand raising up to pick at the wall; it was the only thing he could bring himself to do. *'Is that all I am? Just a piece of their plans…?'*

"When's Sako coming back?" Toga questioned, probably referring to Compress.

"Soon," Spinner replied, hauling himself up onto the iron frame of a disused bed. "Then Giran is coming to fix him up with a mechanical arm."

"Oh! Think he'd want to meet Canary?!"

Midoriya's nails weren't pleased by the action of picking at the wall. He was practically shredding them – but it was all he could focus on.

"Maybe we shouldn't show Giran's face to him," advised Spinner. "Since you insist on keeping him alive, if he gets out, he could give the heroes a lot of information on us."

"He's not getting out," Shigaraki insisted, starting to pack away his cards. He glanced down at him again, "And even if he does, he can't *say anything."*

In a bout of frustration, Midoriya dug his nails so far into the wall that he felt a sharp sting of pain shoot from his fingernails –

– and the wall fall apart beneath them.

The villains didn't notice the slight moment of panic as Midoriya held the melted lump at the end of the chain against the wall, hoping they wouldn't realise that it was no longer attached. It had only been a temporary arrangement until they could either make the bindings more secure, or they basically leased Midoriya out to Overhaul. They must have thought he'd given up on escaping.

Well, that certainly wasn't the case, because as Shigaraki disappeared to chase after Dabi in the pursuit of a phone, Midoriya was trying to position himself to look out of one of the windows without arising suspicion or pulling the wall apart much further.

It was late – the sun was setting over a city, illuminating the back alley that this building was a part of. There was scaffolding on the building next door – old and seemingly abandoned. The cracks on the wall and the scorch marks surrounding them indicated that this may have been the scene of an old villain attack. The building was practically falling apart – hence the scaffolding. Midoriya wasn't sure if it was safe to stand on. Could he even get through the window?

He let his free hand reach up and feel for a latch. The window itself was composed of two, rather large, glass panes, with a single strip of wood, splitting the two vertically. But no, there was no latch; the window couldn't be opened.

He could go after the door… but Shigaraki could be just outside. Either way, to get there, he would have to run past all of the other villains. No – he'd have to risk the window if he wanted to stand a chance.

Midoriya's heart was beating at a hundred miles an hour as he further assessed the situation. Rather surprisingly, none of the windows were as damaged as the rest of the derelict flat.

Ok, ok – he took a deep breath in hopes to calm himself down.

There was a chair within arm's reach. He pulled it towards himself, catching Toga's eye in the process. So, he sat on top of it, still holding onto the crumbling wall without arising much suspicion. It wasn't that weird to want to sit on the chair rather than the cold, hard floor…

He sat there and watched the movements of the villains for a moment

more. Dabi and Shigaraki were outside. Twice was with Compress elsewhere, getting treatment for the loss of his arm. Toga was on the other side of the room, still on that sofa. The closest to him was, in fact, Spinner. He was certainly the most immediate danger.

He was looking at Midoriya right now, narrowing his eyes.

Midoriya looked back as innocently as he could muster. Perhaps that made it look even more suspicious.

Spinner got up from the box he'd been perched on.

Midoriya flinched, and to the ground fell a little lump of rubble.

They stared at it – and then at each other.

Midoriya dropped the end of his chain, tugged as hard as he could, and away it came. Turning with the twisting elegance of dance, he picked up the chair he had been sitting on and tossed it at the window behind him, praying it wouldn't just ricochet off. Thankfully, the window was just as structurally sound as the rest of the building was and shattered at the impact with ease.

He didn't hesitate at the sight of jagged glass and threw himself out of the window just as Spinner's claws reached for the hem of his hoody.

There was a yell as his feet made contact with the edge of the windowsill, the glass cutting at the exposed skin of his legs, beneath his shorts. He propelled himself forwards without daring to look down; reaching forwards in the desperate hope to get out of there.

The world moved in slow motion as he moved through the air across the gap between the buildings – the tune of his wings rising up his throat upon learnt instinct, although it could never even reach the tip of his non-existent tongue.

But then his hand grasped the metal of the scaffolding, and he yanked himself onto the wobbling platform – his foot crashing through the rotting wood.

"SHIGARAKI!" Midoriya heard Spinner cry.

There was no time to lose.

Pulling his foot free, he charged down the length of the scaffolding, hearing the old structure creak and groan beneath him.

He reached the end and once more, leapt into the sky.

The wind in his hair – the fading sunlight on his face. A feeling of freedom he longed to keep forevermore.

Gravity took over once again, and with a tuck and a roll, he landed comfortably on the roof of the next building along – a little lower than the other two. But now wasn't the time to take a breather.

Wrapping the length of the chain around his arm, Midoriya silently thanked Mr Aizawa for his parkour lessons, and took off across the roof, bounding over to the next one, and then the one after that, hearing the distant screams of the villains behind him. A glance over his shoulder as he went revealed that he hadn't quiet gotten away yet.

But without Kurogiri around, Midoriya knew he had the slightest chance.

That was a chance he was willing to take.

"True or false – the Earth becomes twelve tonnes heavier every year because of meteorites landing on it."

Mina narrowed her eyes at Shinso, as he grinned at her mercilessly. *Please get it wrong – please get it wrong – please get it wrong –*

"There's no way, meteorites are *tiny!"* protested Kirishima.

"Tell that to the *dinosaurs,"* Sero scoffed.

"Guys, you're not allowed to help Mina!" Yaoyorozu reminded them for the hundredth time.

Mina was busy trying to get through Shinso's poker face – and failing.

"…*false,"* she decided on.

Shinso just kept grinning.

“It’s true, isn’t it?” she sighed. “WHY ARE YOU SO GOOD AT THIS?!”

“I think maybe you’re just bad at it, Mina,” Tsu pointed out. Shinso was liking Tsuyu more and more.

Mina just groaned loudly and fell backwards to throw a mini tantrum on the floor as Shinso claimed the card for his team.

“Ok, who’s next from Bakugo’s team?” Yaoyorozu questioned.

“Oh, let me go!” Hagakure exclaimed as her floating pyjamas bounced up and down.

“Yeah – try and see through *Hagakure’* poker face!” Mina laughed.

“Who is guessing from Shinso’s team?” pressed Yaoyorozu. “Have you all had a go?”

“I believe it is Jiro next,” Iida nodded.

“Go on, Owl!” Uraraka cried, punching the air excitably.

Jiro scooted forwards to the front of the group as Hagakure picked up a card from the dwindling pile of *facts.*

“In some parts of northern Chile, it hasn’t rained for over four hundred years!”

Jiro replied immediately, “True,” and held out her hand to accept the card. “Canary has said that one before – it’s in the Atacama Desert.”

“When did he say that?” Iida frowned.

“When we were complaining about it raining all the time,” Jiro answered.

“Yeah and Midoriya said he didn’t have an umbrella since the last one got *vandalised,”* Shinso shot a look at Bakugo.

“Well I didn’t *freaking do it,”* he hissed back.

“Guys, come on – we were doing so well!” Kirishima sighed.

“At the game? Because we really haven’t,” Sato pointed out, glancing at their small collection of cards in comparison to Shinso’s team’s.

The game was to guess whether the fact read out was true or false. Get

it right and your team keeps the card. Get it wrong and it goes to the other team. Simple enough, but Midoriya's constant spout of knowledge seemed to have infected most of Shinso's friends, and consequently, they had realised that, if they'd never heard the fact before, there was a good chance it was made up, and thus, false.

Shinso had the entire aria on his team, alongside Tokoyami, who Shinso had been talking to from time to time ever since the summer camp, Koda, which was an obvious choice, and finally Asui, who Uraraka had insisted on having on their team, and Shinso was glad he'd agreed. Everyone else, excluding Yaoyorozu of course, had ended up with Bakugo, who had become rather frustrated at the first game they'd attempted playing.

"There's only three cards left," pointed out Jiro. "We've definitely won this round – so, should we just move onto the next game?"

Bakugo didn't look too pleased, but the others did, so, as they started cleaning up the scattered cards, Yaoyorozu drew the first tally line on the score board and moved to the other available games.

"What should we do next?" she asked, spreading them out of the table as soon as the cards were out of the way.

"Not Monopoly," Ojiro sighed, "that'll take forever."

"Cluedo?" suggested Uraraka.

"Yeah! And Momo could choose the killer and the weapon and stuff!" Hagakure said gleefully.

"Ok, sounds fun! I don't know what it is though, so you may have to explain the rules." she grinned. "We have eight players on each team… and the maximum is…"

"Six," Todoroki replied, checking the back of the box.

"Hm, ok then," she frowned. "Why don't the team leaders suggest three people, excluding or including themselves, to be the players?"

"Me, Weird Hair and Arms," Bakugo decided instantly.

"I'm assuming that's me?" Shoji questioned hesitantly.

"Right, who wants to play from our team?" Shinso asked, turning back to them. "Even better, who actually knows how to play this game?"

“I’ve played it with my siblings once or twice,” Tsu admitted.

“I can’t remember the last time I played it, but I definitely have at some point,” Jiro sighed.

“Right, there we have it then,” Shinso nodded.

“Ok, and then if the others pair up with the players from their teams, I think,” Yaoyorozu instructed. “With one person having two people with them.”

“And then no one else can help the others, even if they’re on the same team?” suggested Iida.

“Sounds like a good idea!” Yaoyorozu nodded as she poured herself some more tea. “Right then – how… how do we play this?”

Footfalls against hard concrete – echoing up the dark alleyways.

He didn’t know where he was; he didn’t know where he was going. All he knew was to get *away*.

Midoriya skidded to a halt at the end of the alley as a torrent of blue flame blocked his path, scorching the ends of his hair.

“You won’t be getting away that easily,” Dabi hissed as he came into view, ready to blast him again.

Midoriya turned on his heel to run in the other direction, but faltered when he saw Spinner there, a singular sword unsheathed. But Spinner had left at the same time as Toga, so if he was there, then –

Midoriya swung around wildly behind him, his fist making contact with the side of Toga’s head, making her drop the blade that was seconds away from digging into his shoulder. In panic, he ran down the last remaining alleyway as Toga recovered.

He knew what was coming before it happened.

Shigaraki was standing there, waiting for him.

Midoriya charged forwards, determined to get past. But the villain

lunged before he had expected him to, grasping the end of the chain that persisted to dangle from Midoriya's wrist. He tripped as his arm was pulled backwards, and within seconds, Shigaraki had him pinned against the wall, his hand around his neck.

"So *difficult,"* he snarled as Midoriya struggled to get away, pulling at the villain's hand in vain.

"Good job," sighed Dabi as the others caught up with Shigaraki.

"*Man,"* Toga panted, "I really thought he was going to get away for a second there!"

Shigaraki's fury grew greater, pushing Midoriya further into the wall as he choked. "If you weren't so vital to our future operations I would *kill you*. Right here – *right now."*

Midoriya kicked and growled – he wouldn't be going back without a fight. He *wouldn't!*

Spinner seemed to realise this, "Now what?" he groaned, "There's no way we'll get him back easily."

"Listen here," Shigaraki growled, his eyes practically glowing in his anger. "You are going to follow us back, and you aren't going to *dare* try something like that again."

Midoriya cried out something indistinguishable; even he wasn't sure what he had tried to say, as he scratched at Shigaraki's skin.

"If you don't do as I say then we'll go and get you a little *friend."*

Midoriya's eyes grew wide, shaking as he hesitated in his efforts to free himself.

Shigaraki smiled. "The UA students are in the dorms now, so they'll be a little harder to reach. But we could take any one of the *idiots* wearing a happy little Canary jumper; pluck them off from the streets, and you two could spend time with us *together*. How's that for an idea?"

Midoriya stared at him for a moment, trying to read his expression underneath that dismembered hand which covered his face. It wasn't hard to tell that he was serious.

He was dropped to the ground.

Midoriya gasped for air by Shigaraki's feet, coughing and spluttering.

Damnit – he was *so close.* But now what? He couldn't put *someone else* in this position! If he dared flee again, how could he know that they won't take revenge?

"Get up," Shigaraki hissed, kicking Midoriya in his side for good measure.

'Bastard.'

Trembling, Midoriya managed to do as he was told, hanging his head in a depressive state.

"Let's go," Shigaraki nodded, and he begun to march away.

He wavered for a moment, but eventually complied.

Midoriya didn't know what made him move his feet as he followed the villains back. Toga skipped along beside him, complaining that he was moving too slowly from time to time, so Dabi jabbed him harshly in the back.

But it wasn't long before Midoriya stopped all together, gazing at his feet.

The villains were dead silent for a moment. He knew they must have been staring at him.

What was he *doing…?*

Was this it? Was this him… giving up?

What else could he do? He couldn't get out – and no one was coming for him. Were the heroes even looking anymore? Had they given up too? Did… they think he was dead? Overhaul had…

"Come on, Canary!" Toga called out to him.

He let his head droop lower – and he took a step forward, finally accepting his fate.

– Which was when it happened.

Into his leg, a small, white mass had tumbled.

Midoriya blinked. It was a little girl – bandages covering her arms and legs, possibly even under that rag-like dress she wore. With watery, red eyes, she gazed up at him, her long, grey-white hair pouring like waterfalls over one of them.

“Eri?” someone called out.

The girl flinched, not getting up as she looked over her shoulder, down another street.

“Hey, what’s going on?!” Toga exclaimed, hurrying back over to them. “Who’s *that?”*

But Midoriya was a little more transfixed on the man who had just stepped out of the shadows.

He narrowed his eyes, “Fancy running into you here, Canary,” said Overhaul.

“We suspect that it was…” Uraraka started menacingly.

“Colonel Mustard, in the living room, with the candle stick,” Asui finished.

Bakugo showed her a card with the same type of aggression that one would flip up their middle finger, and Uraraka groaned loudly.

“Back to the drawing board,” she sighed.

“I’m not the freaking murderer!” Bakugo cried out in frustration.

“Well, we know that *now,”* Shinso said, rolling his eyes. “Write that in our notebook, Iida?”

“Of course!” Iida exclaimed and eagerly crossed off Colonel Mustard as the suspect.

“Wait, you’ve got to move the weapon to the living room. If there’s no weapon in the room, the suspect’s used their Quirk, remember?” Jiro recalled, doing just that after she rolled the dice for her turn. “Anyway – damnit, why do I *always* roll such small numbers?!”

“At least you’re still in the game,” Kaminari sighed melodramatically, since he and Kirishima made an accusation way too early and were already out of the game.

The challenge was to figure out who was the murderer, where, and what the weapon was. The cards with those details on were in Yaoyorozu’s hands, whilst the rest were either in the pile, or were held by the others. You could suspect someone, and then the others had to prove you were wrong by showing you one of their cards. But if you made an *accusation* that was wrong, then you were completely out of the game.

“Right, Iida, Todoroki, it’s our go,” Shinso announced, retrieving the dice off Jiro.

“Don’t roll it over my character again,” she pouted, which made him keen to do just that, but he didn’t, because he was *such a good friend.*

Speaking of which – it had taken him a while to realise that. They were *his friends.* Not just Midoriya’s friends who he hung out with purely because of that. Without Midoriya around, he had finally come to terms with the fact that he had friends *other than Midoriya.* That didn’t make him miss him any less though…

“Ok, we’re in a room – are we suspecting anyone?” Shinso asked Iida. He was the one in charge of their notebook of suspects, but Todoroki was the one making up the theories. Neither of them had played the game before, and frankly, neither had Shinso. However, Todoroki was eerily good at it.

“We’re making an accusation,” Todoroki announced.

A series of *ooooh-s* rang out across the room.

“The local conspiracy theorist strikes again,” Jiro smirked.

“You sure?” Shinso questioned, raising an eyebrow.

He nodded confidently, and that was enough for Shinso. “Alright then…”

“Colonel Mustard, with his Quirk, in the library.”

“I just *freaking* said –” Bakugo started but was quickly interrupted by none other than Yaoyorozu.

She grinned, “He’s right.”

“WHAT?!” he yelled.

“*Yes*, Puffin!” Shinso laughed.

“I’M NOT THE VILLAIN!” Bakugo yelled.

“That’s not how the game works, Bakugo. It’s alright, man,” Kirishima said, trying to calm him down.

“Yeah, the civilians are trying to figure out who the villain is before the heroes come and the police arrest all of them,” supposed Ojiro.

“But then why is the villain himself trying to solve the case?” frowned Mina.

“I guess to not arouse suspicion,” said Yaoyorozu.

“Yeah, what if Bakugo accused *himself?”* added Sero. “That wouldn’t make sense, he’s handing himself in.”

“Whatever, it’s a pre-Quirk era game, right?” Kirishima pointed out, “Of course, there are bound to be weird… plot holes or something when they tried to make it more relevant.”

“Anyway – Shinso’s team get another point!” Yaoyorozu announced, getting up to add the tally.

“This is stupid, I’m going to bed,” Bakugo proclaimed, tossing his cards onto the board and getting up.

Shinso sighed – it looked like he’d have to save the day *again*. “No need to be such a sore loser.”

“I’m not a sore loser!” he yelled, “And I haven’t freaking lost yet! Let me choose the next game!”

Shinso grinned – he was so easy to manipulate that he didn’t even

need to *think* about using his Quirk.

Bakugo took box after box out of Yaoyorozu's arms, discarding each one of them, until finally, all she was left with was a pack of cards with the top heroes from a few years ago detailed across them. He snatched it off her and held it up to the group.

"Who here can play poker?"

"ME!" Mina yelled, raising her hand eagerly. Alongside her, it was Kaminari, Shoji, Hagakure and Jiro who knew how to play, everyone else's hands remained stubbornly lowered.

Bakugo sighed, "Of freaking course – alright, how about Go Fish?"

That got a few more responses.

"That one's easier to explain," Yaoyorozu nodded, who was one of those who knew the game. "If we do the same as last time, but have pairs instead, so eight teams in total playing?"

"Sounds good!" exclaimed Hagakure, who, due to her invisible nature, was probably pretty good at card games.

And so, Yaoyorozu handed out the cards as everyone else moved chairs around in a circle, ensuring that no one close to them would be able to see their cards.

"So," she began, "for those who do not understand. You will have seven cards to begin with, and your task is to collect as many sets of four as possible. For example, the nine of hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades makes one set of nines. You can then put the set down on the table and you get a point. The group with the most sets at the end wins. When it's your go, you can ask any of the other teams if they have a certain card. Let's say, you're trying to get the set of threes, and currently only have two of them. You could then ask, Bakugo, do you have any threes? And if he does, he has to hand one over. If he doesn't, you pick one up from the pile here."

"Go fish!" Hagakure cried.

"Exactly!" Yaoyorozu said, clapping her hands together. "Let's start with someone who definitely knows how to play so that everyone who doesn't can get used to it."

"Eyebags," Bakugo said out of the blue. Shinso blinked at him in

confusion, before he added, “got any kings?”

He wavered before actually figuring out what he was being asked. Todoroki, who was somehow paired up with him, beat him to it, “Go fish – is that right?”

“Err, yeah – yeah, go fish. We don’t have any kings,” Shinso nodded.

He tutted and picked up a card from the pile, letting Kirishima glance over his shoulder at his set.

“Ok, and we’ll move to Bakugo’s left next!” Yaoyorozu decided, wandering around the room to check that everyone had gotten into pairs.

“Oh – the other way around to last time then,” Mina pointed out. She looked rather disappointed she wasn’t going next.

“That’s us!” Uraraka said happily. “Err… can you ask for cards that you don’t have *any* of the set yet?”

“No – you have to have like, one eight to ask for other eights,” Mina explained.

“Ah ok – right… Kaminari and Sero! Do you have any… tens?” she guessed.

“No,” Kaminari replied way too quickly.

“No lying,” Jiro scowled.

“I’m not *lying!”* he exclaimed.

“You have a ten – right there,” Yaoyorozu said, stealing the ten and giving it to Uraraka.

“I swear I didn’t see that!”

Shinso frowned, “Hey, Owl?”

“Hm?” Jiro replied.

“Can you tell if someone’s lying by using your Quirk?”

She hesitated, “You know… I’ve never thought of that.”

“That’s a really cool idea, Raven!” Uraraka said excitably, flashing her

cards unintentionally. She had a couple of queens…

“Oh, thanks,” Shinso replied, paying more attention to the fact that he had the other two queens.

“It’s the kind of thing that Midoriya would point out,” Todoroki added.

They all fell silent.

“Can I just…” Uraraka started, but she quickly broke off. “I… I miss him… I know we all haven’t been talking about it for… reasons. But… I think we should.”

But no one said anything more for a moment, just staring at their cards and waiting for someone else to make the first move.

“I was looking forward to having him in our class,” Jiro bravely announced. “And I know he was gone even before the idea of the dorms came about. But I couldn’t stop thinking about all the stupid stuff we’d all get up to with him around.”

Shinso put his cards face down on his lap as he picked up Siren in her entire nest, “Siren running rampage,” he grinned.

“Really unnecessary random facts,” Jiro added with an equal smile.

“Over analysing every little detail of *everything*,” said Uraraka, leaning her head on Asui’s shoulder.

“There would be music playing *constantly,*” Jiro told the others. “Probably in English so you’d have no idea what’s going on and then he accidently sets fire to something.”

There was a soft murmur of laughter across the group.

“Did I ever say he was in my dance class?” Mina questioned.

“Yes,” sighed Jiro. “Many, *many* times.”

“We could have given you all dance lessons!” she finished, either ignoring Jiro’s last comment or missing it completely, “That would have been funny!”

“You know there’s nothing stopping you doing all these things now.” That, weirdly enough, came from *Bakugo*.

“Bakugo wants dance lessons!” Mina yelled.

“I do *not!”* he yelled back. “I’m just saying that there’s no need in moping around when you don’t *have* to wait for Deku to do any of this!” Bakugo hesitated as he reorganised his hand of cards. “Besides, he wouldn’t want you to be like this…”

Shinso wavered. He almost smiled; he knew Bakugo wouldn’t get anymore sympathetic than that. “Uraraka, got any queens?”

“Please… don’t go…”

Midoriya stared, dumbfounded, at the little girl who had grasped onto the hem of his shorts. He was standing with a group of publicly recognised villains. He himself, could have *easily* been one of them – yet this girl, Eri, seemed so scared, that she’d latch onto *anyone* that wasn’t *him.*

“Overhaul,” Shigaraki snarled as he waltzed back into view. “What are you doing here?”

“I could ask you the same question,” Overhaul replied, scratching at that beak-like plague mask of his. “I thought your group moved out of town ever since that warehouse was found by the heroes.”

‘*Heroes found the warehouse?’* Midoriya’s eyes widened. Maybe he should have scratched his name into the wall – *anything* to give them the slightest indication that he was *still here*. His heart started beating faster once more as his eyes drifted down to the girl by his feet.

He couldn’t let anyone else suffer this fate.

Midoriya bent down and scooped Eri up into his arms. She clutched onto his tattered hoody, a little horn on the side of her head digging into the side of his neck.

Overhaul glared at him, “Put her down, Canary. This is none of your business.”

“Don’t let her go,” snapped Shigaraki.

Midoriya wasn’t planning on doing so anyway, but he took a few steps

away from the villains, narrowing his eyes as he tried to figure out what was going on.

“Did you think about calling me?” Overhaul questioned Shigaraki, tearing his eyes away from Midoriya for a moment as he diverted the topic.

“I would have done, if Canary hadn’t decided to try and run off.”

“Didn’t get very far then?”

Midoriya growled at him. The light of determination that had been flickering on and off for the past few weeks was coming back in full force, now that there was someone else to protect thrown in the mix, other than himself.

“This isn’t the place to be discussing such matters anyway,” Overhaul sighed. “Call me and we’ll organise a proper… meeting.”

Midoriya noticed how Toga’s blade was pointing in Overhaul’s direction rather than his now. Spinner’s did the same; none of them were keen to get along with the man who had killed one of their own. Silently, Midoriya agreed.

“Come, Eri.”

Midoriya gripped tightly onto the back of Eri’s dress, his eyes alight with an unspoken fury as the girl trembled in his arms.

Overhaul simply sighed again, “I’d rather not make a mess. Besides, you’ll be joining her soon enough.”

“Who’s the girl?” Shigaraki insisted, repeating Toga’s unanswered question. “Your daughter?”

“Not exactly…” he replied, taking a step closer as Midoriya moved away. “Come on, Canary – we haven’t got all day.”

“No, I think we’ll keep a hold of her,” Shigaraki grinned menacingly. “And we’ll have that *meeting* before we decide what to do with her. How does that sound?”

Overhaul’s hand moved towards the top of the glove on his other. “I thought we’d moved past all this killing each other business…”

“We won’t be killing anyone tonight,” Shigaraki leered. “But you will be serving under *us* once we’re through with you. This time, you have

no backup, and we have a little more… *firepower* – Dabi!"

"Gladly," and Dabi stepped forwards from the shadows, his fist burning with his infamous blue flame.

"You will regret this!" snapped Overhaul, tossing his glove to the ground, "And I will be taking Eri *and* Canary with me!" he yelled as the blue fire was thrown towards him, a wall of flame forming between the villains and Midoriya.

Which was when he took his chance.

He turned on his heel, strengthened his grip on Eri – and he *ran*.

"No – where are you going?" Eri whispered into his shoulder. "He'll kill you…"

His escape wasn't panicked this time – fuelled by someone drunk on the taste of freedom. This was no longer some desperate, failing attempt to break out of the chains that held him back. He *would* get out of there. And Eri *was* coming with him – whether the villains liked it or not!

It didn't take long for them to realise Midoriya was on the move again though. However, now that the two oppositions were present, they weren't as quick on their feet.

They tussled with their power, throwing blows left and right as they stumbled over each other to pursue Midoriya.

Eri had started to cry, her trembling form gazing over Midoriya's shoulder as she watched the villains yell and scream.

Midoriya held her closer and began humming in her ear – a tune that his Quirk would have used to calm her down if he could access it at

all. He ducked around a corner as he caught a glimpse of Toga tossing one of her knives in their direction.

Eri screamed in fright, but Midoriya kept going. He had to lose their trail somehow.

Down alley after alley, street after street, Midoriya ran. His muscles did not ache and his breath did not hitch. He just kept going, deaf to everything but Eri's wails.

Until –

– the light of the city hit him in full force.

With a free hand, he pulled up his hood and managed to tuck the trailing chain under the sleeve of his hoody. And he stepped out into the gently heaving crowd of the evening commute.

Out on the pavement, he hesitated, and glanced behind him.

A panting figure stood, with one hand against the wall, his eyes wide and wild as he saw Midoriya step out into normality.

If Overhaul acted now, his criminal status would be revealed to the world, and he would be arrested immediately. He couldn't even accuse Midoriya of kidnapping his daughter – because this was *Canary* – missing for over two weeks at the hands of some of the most dangerous villains in the country.

With Overhaul framed against the shadows, and Midoriya against the glow of civilisation, they parted ways.

Midoriya walked in silence for a moment, dodging the people who gave him funny looks as he passed by with Eri in his arms.

Eventually, he stopped, and let the first smile for half a month stretch across his damaged face.

He was *free.*

Chapter End Notes

ART!

101's first up with a super cool drawing of Midoriya singing Human back at the summer camp!

Then this isn't strictly Canary fanart but it's relevant – we have a super cute Midoriya and Shinso done by A Dust Speck Fluent in Nothing

Thelovypop17 will never miss an upload as it seems, as she's back, but this time we have the broken picture frame that Inko's looking at, missing her son DX – Don't worry, she won't have to wait long now!

And to end on a bit of a lighter note, littlemusic…meiyou did a sweet drawing of Dove for us!

The Flight for Freedom

Chapter Notes

…I feel like this story is going on for way too long – I'm *sorry!*

Sometimes I see fics with high chapter counts and I'm like, this is too much of a commitment to read. So… *sorry*…

But, err – I went back and fixed my chapter plan! Because, as you may have realised, according to my previous one, chapter 40 would be the final chapter and this is chapter thirty-six… But, um, no, there are more than four chapters left… probably more like… *ten.*

– I'M SORRY OK?!?!?

…It's just the way it worked out – *sniff*

So, um, my plan says chapter *46* will be the last one… But we also know how well my chapter count estimations go… so…

** finger guns and slowly backs away **

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I WIN!" Hagakure yelled, tossing the set of aces that she'd just collected onto the table, finishing off her hand. She had nothing left and was completely out of the game – not that it mattered.

"Yeah, she's got six sets, we're all doomed," sighed Sero, staring it the sets of cards before him, none of which were his.

Uraraka just sat hesitantly with her singular card, "Err… Uno?"

"*That's what we're playing next,"* Mina said menacingly. "All for finishing this game here and playing Uno?"

Nearly everyone raised their hands.

Shinso didn't though, mainly because he was one card away from another set and he was *pretty* sure Bakugo had it. Oh well, he'd never beat six anyways.

"We could stay in these pairs to make things a little easier?" Yaoyorozu suggested, vaguely scanning the rules on the back of the Uno box as Iida frantically tidied away the playing cards.

"Sounds like a plan," Shinso sighed. He'd said that way too many times that evening. Honestly, he was looking forward to this being over, so he could go to bed and listen to Midoriya's playlist calmly, and *maybe* drift off to sleep. If the gods would permit as such.

"Ok, do we all know how to play?" questioned Yaoyorozu as she handed out a few cards to each pair.

"No?" Todoroki frowned, who seemed to have not played any board games *ever* – but was still rather good at them.

"You'll catch up quick," Shinso predicted as he tried not to grin at his plus four card.

"You've just gotta get rid of all your cards!" Mina explained. "Put them down if the one in the middle is the same colour or has the same number!"

"…What about those black ones with the plus symbol on it?" he frowned.

"Not that we have one, of course," Shinso added quickly.

"No, not at all," Jiro grinned, rolling her eyes, whispering something to Koda, who had ended up being her partner.

Shinso narrowed his eyes at her and sunk further back into his chair. She did the same.

"Put that down and the next person has to pick up four cards, according to the rules!" Yaoyorozu exclaimed happily. "Hagakure won the last round, so she'll go first!"

"Yes!" she said, supposedly punching the sky. It was a little hard to tell when everything but her short sleeved pyjama top was invisible.

"We can't even go, Hagakure," sighed her teammate, Ojiro.

She groaned loudly whilst they had to pick up five cards until they finally got the green one that they needed.

“Ok, everyone make it green again,” Kaminari announced with a grin as Shinso took the opportunity to do just that.

“Oh, *come on!* You’re on my team!”

“But I want to win,” he pouted, before fake crying that he never won anything.

Shinso was already getting a migraine. “I need more coffee.”

Midoriya was overthinking this. He was giving himself a headache. So many things were going on at once. He didn’t even know what *emotion* to feel.

“Mr… Canary?” Midoriya blinked down at Eri, who had been walking along, holding his hand. “Where are we going?”

Ah, that was a good point.

He stopped in his tracks, glancing around. He’d just been *walking* – still in the mind of getting as far away as possible, without considering actually *getting back*.

There was also the small matter that he had technically just kidnapped someone. That someone seemed rather content with being kidnapped, to be fair. But regardless, other than the name *Canary*, which the villains had thrown around, Eri didn’t really know who he was – why they were here – where they were going – how to get there – when it was all going to be over – and, in the end, what the heck was going on in the first place.

Midoriya glanced around, before his eyes settled on a slightly damp bench underneath a sad looking tree on the side of the road. He pointed at it and pulled Eri towards it, sitting down and helping her shuffle up there too.

Ok, right. Now, how would he explain all this without being able to speak? To a girl who most definitely doesn’t know sign language and who probably can’t even read? Not that Midoriya had anything to

write with anyway…

She blinked at him expectantly.

Midoriya sighed. It looked like there was only one option left – to descend to one of the lowest forms of communication that he had to use when no one knew sign language – a rather elaborate game of charades.

He pointed at himself, then tried to imitate a chatting mouth with his hands, before pointing to his mouth and forming a cross over it.

Eri just tilted her head to one side and frowned.

Wow, this was going *great.*

He did the actions again, but a little slower this time.

Eri looked even *more* confused. “C-Can you… can you speak?”

Midoriya shook his head frantically in agreement. She probably hadn’t concluded that from his acting skills, and more from the fact he’d yet to say a word and was taking a rather roundabout way of trying to explain something to her.

“O-Ok…” she stammered. Midoriya felt awful – putting this much pressure on the little girl, but he didn’t have much of a choice. “Um, Canary – t-that’s your name?”

Midoriya nodded.

“Ok – Canary – um, w-why did you… why did you do that?”

Now it was Midoriya’s turn to be confused.

“Y-You could have hurt yourself… why did you take me? Why did you run?”

Midoriya hesitated. Then, he lifted up his right arm and held it out to her. When he was sure no one was looking, he pulled back the sleeve, revealing the battered cuff and chain hidden underneath.

Eri stared at it for a moment, before she realised what he was trying to say, “Did they… keep you trapped too?”

Midoriya nodded, pulling his sleeve back over the chain again.

Eri blinked up at him. “You have bandages on your face,” she said, noticing them sticking out from underneath his surgical mask.

He instinctively reached up to gingerly touch the left of his face, where the injury lay.

“I-I have bandages too,” Eri continued, holding up her arms, gazing up with sad eyes. “They’re supposed to make things better, but they don’t. Are you hurt?”

Midoriya wavered for a moment; those were not things that a young girl should be saying. But he nodded again, pointing to his jaw.

“Is that why you can’t speak?”

He nodded, feeling rather stupid that it was all he could do.

Eri crumpled the end of her dress in her hands, the bottom of her lip shaking. “W-W-What do we do? W-Where are we g-going?”

Midoriya reached out to her and pulled her into a hug. She flinched at it initially, but quickly melted into the touch. It was all he could do to comfort her for now.

Ok, next – time to try and resolve those questions of hers…

Midoriya glanced around. He didn’t recognise the area. There was no map in sight, and he couldn’t exactly *ask* someone where the nearest police station or hospital was… Besides, he wasn’t too happy with going to those locations anyway – considering what happened *last* time he’d reached a police station…

A good amount of time had passed since his escape – the villains were bound to be looking for him, and with Eri present, he wasn’t too hard to locate. He needed to get away – to somewhere safe, as quickly as possible.

And then his eyes zeroed in on what was behind him.

A train station.

‘That could work…’

He pulled away from Eri, patting her on the head as he stood up. Her big, tearful eyes looked up at him, and her bare feet cautiously reached the ground after his encouragement.

Midoriya bent down and pointed to his back. Fortunately, Eri took the hint, and Midoriya was able to carry her piggyback style into the station.

The people milling in and out gave him some funny looks, but didn't try to stop him, as Midoriya wandered around, a little lost –

– there, a map!

He hurried towards it, green eyes scanning the information on a… rather familiar train line.

He was an hour from UA.

That was it!

One hour and he would be safe – and Eri too!

Only one problem remained – how to get on the next train, that left in barely five minutes…

An idea sparked in his mind.

Ensuring that Eri had a secure enough grip on his shoulders, Midoriya used a free hand to pat down the bulky pockets of his shorts. Sure enough, there it was – the battered remains of his phone. As he removed it from the pocket, spilling a rather large quantity of bird seed out with it, pieces of glass came loose from the screen. It was well and truly knackered. He'd ruined it back when Tokoyami's Quirk lashed out in the forest at the summer camp. But after he was taken, one of the villains had made doubly sure it couldn't be salvaged, smashing it against the side of the old bar, before handing the device back to him as a terrible reminder that rescue simply wasn't coming.

But there was one other detail about his phone, that the villains hadn't realised. And if they had, they hadn't seen the importance in it.

Because back when he had lost his key card to the radio station, and he met Jiro for the first time, he'd made the decision to keep the orange card concealed between the back of his phone and his phone case. But that wasn't the only card he'd committed to keeping there.

With shaking hands, Midoriya prised the case away, and pulled from

inside it, three, perfectly intact cards – the one for the radio station, his student ID, and his train pass.

His heart *soared* when he found it. He almost cried.

Eri nearly fell off as Midoriya ran into the crowd, weaving through those who weren't in as much of a rush, towards the barriers. But that moment of euphoria quickly faded, when the card failed to do its duty, and let the two of them through.

"Is it not working?"

Midoriya panicked at the voice, the adrenaline of the situation still persisting in his veins. He calmed a little when he saw that it was only a worker at the station. She narrowed her eyes at him, probably not with recognition, but more because of his rather battered state, and the equally bad, if not worse, condition that Eri was in.

"Um, come this way and I'll just let you through," she nodded, urging the two of them to follow her to a broken barrier, as to not stop the flow of people. Perhaps she was just keen to let him keep going, rather than figure out what on Earth was wrong.

Midoriya gave her a quick bow when he passed. She shouldn't have let him pass – come to think of it, his train card most likely would never have worked for this station regardless. But that wasn't of his concern at the moment, for a train had just pulled up to the platform directly in front of him. And that really was, his ticket out of here.

"Don't you dare," Jiro said, giving Shinso a look. "Don't you even *dare* _"

And he put his plus four card on top of the other one that Hagakure had insisted on using.

"Uno," Todoroki said helpfully.

"God *damn it!"* Jiro cried, aggressively snatching the eight cards that Kouda had already collected from the pile for her. "I was going to *win!"*

"What colour?" Ojiro pressed, probably keen to see whether Shinso

would continue the whole game routine of making it green at every possible opportunity.

“Todoroki?” Shinso called.

He narrowed his eyes at Jiro, “…Blue.”

“WHY?!” she cried.

Everyone laughed hysterically as she was forced to pick up another couple of cards before a blue one could finally be located.

“Many apologies, Uraraka and Asui, but this is our only possible movement,” Tokoyami sighed as he used another skip card.

“Ah, it’s ok – we’re not going to win anyways,” Uraraka smiled.

“Yeah, but I am,” Bakugo grinned as he put his last card down.

“NO!” Mina yelled, “No! We had a *strategy!”*

“We’re on the same team!” Bakugo yelled in response.

“But I wanted to *wwwiiinnn!”* she moaned, throwing her second fake tantrum of the night.

“Ok, we’re all tied up!” Yaoyorozu announced, adding the fourth tally mark to the board. “What shall we do to break that?”

“UNO!” Mina insisted.

“We *just* played that,” Sero acknowledged blatantly.

“Yeah, and we suck!” Kaminari added.

“Come on!” she protested, “Can’t we play another game? Please?!”

“If you can get me more coffee then I don’t mind,” Shinso sighed.

“Same,” Todoroki nodded.

“Your *coffee* is just pure, evil caffeine!” Jiro exclaimed, still rather bitter about her loss as she collected in the Uno cards for Yaoyorozu, shuffling them poorly in her hands.

“I’ll get some,” Todoroki offered, not trying to deny Jiro’s proclamation.

“Thanks,” Shinso nodded.

“I’ll have some too,” oddly enough, came from Bakugo – full of surprises that night.

Shinso raised an eyebrow.

“Am I not allowed coffee?” he snapped.

“Everyone, please, can we try not to argue about every little thing?” sighed Iida. If even *Iida* was reaching his limit, it must have been bad.

“So… three cups?” Todoroki questioned.

Shinso nodded and he wandered away to do just that. Todoroki had never had coffee before coming to the dorms, and when Shinso located the coffee machine, he was quick to ask how to make the stuff. Consequently, he probably didn’t know what *normal* coffee tasted like… Oh well, he was good at making what Shinso liked, and that was all he cared about.

“Oh! Sorry, Siren,” Jiro said as she dropped a card on the bird’s head. She didn’t stir.

“Is… she ok?” frowned Kirishima, bending down to look a little closer at Siren.

Shinso hadn’t even noticed she was awake. “No, not really,” he admitted. “Koda’s tried talking to her, but we can’t get a… a *chirp*. Not even a wing flap recently. She just sits around and pulls out her feathers – occasionally eating bird seed.”

Uraraka picked up the cardboard bird nest, being careful not to disturb its overflowing contents. “She looks so… sad.”

“She is,” Kouda said.

Sometimes, the words of someone who uttered them rarely, meant so much more than those which belonged to someone who always spoke their mind.

And despite all the distractions, once again, Shinso’s thoughts boomeranged back to Midoriya. And to that one question that had been haunting him for half a month now –

Where was he now?

Midoriya was on a train.

Eri sat on the window seat. As the train started rolling, Midoriya tapped her on the shoulder and pointed out the window. She looked confused for a moment, but those eyes of her were soon alight with the child-like curiosity that *belonged* there.

It wasn't long before she had her face pressed against the window, watching the world go by.

"Look, Canary," she whispered, tugging on his sleeve. "Look at all the lights…"

Midoriya shuffled up closer to her, lifting her up onto his lap so she was held at a better position, and so he could catch a glimpse too.

It was such a trivial thing – the lights of the city now that the sun had set. But for the two souls, trapped away from that light for so long, it was enough to muster tears.

One hour left.

One hour – and it was all over.

"Where is it taking us?" Eri asked, and Midoriya realised he'd never answered.

He smiled under his mask and uttered one of the few words that he could:

"Home."

They ended up playing two games of Uno. Mainly because it had gotten *rather* competitive. Shinso was more than happy to end the evening on a high note after Asui and Uraraka reigned victorious for the next game, but everyone else was keen to try their luck with *just one more.* And then, since Kaminari and Sero won that one (much to Mina's disappointment), they were once again, left at a tie.

"Ok, this'll be the last thing we do, I think," Yaoyorozu sighed. It *was* starting to get a little late now.

"What *are* we doing?" questioned Jiro, who was just as sad as Mina that she never ended up winning Uno.

"Um…" Yaoyorozu seemed a little stumped as she turned around again after adding another tally mark to the score board. "I don't know… Well, Bakugo chose one – shouldn't Shinso?"

Shinso took one look at the array of board games before him, and said, "Charades."

Jiro rolled her eyes, "No sign language."

He hesitated – pouting at her, "But… can we use our Quirks?"

There was a moment of silence between them all.

Shinso grinned, "This is going to go *horribly* wrong."

Midoriya lifted Eri up into his arms, after pulling his hood firmly over his head, double checking that he still had his phone and various cards on him and ensuring that the chain on his wrist was still hidden.

He'd gotten this far – he might as well go all the way.

This was it.

He almost *skipped* out of the train, ignoring the persistent stinging of the side of his face as he grinned stupidly beneath the bandages. Holding Eri tight, he *ran* out of the station – eyes gleaming as he began to recognise the streets and rising hills. It wasn't long before the

glow of UA reached his face. A halo of light around the towering building – a safe haven – the closest thing to home that he could get at the moment.

He knew the students boarded there now, which meant that there were definitely heroes at the school. And since Present Mic and Mr Aizawa were both homeroom teachers, there was a good chance that *both* of them were there. But that wasn't even what excited him the most –

He was going to see his friends again – hear their voices, free of the static over the radio. And finally, *finally* – this whole, terrible ordeal, would come to a close.

Midoriya came to a halt outside the looming gates of UA – the final obstacle. Get inside here, and the villains couldn't touch him.

His heart was beating so fast that he was sure that it would burst out of his chest.

Holding Eri tight, he retrieved his student ID from his pocket, prayed that the gates wouldn't slam shut on him, and charged at full pelt across the threshold –

– without the alarms going off.

He definitely wasn't crying, as he lowered Eri to the ground, shoved the ID in the back of his phone case, and punched the sky in an undoubtable victory.

"We're… home?" Eri questioned.

Midoriya fell to his knees. "…Home."

"…It's big."

Midoriya let out a small laugh and nodded. He almost fell over as he tried to get to his feet again.

It was time to close this chapter of his life, once and for all.

He held out his hand to Eri, who took it eagerly. And then, after having a quick glance at his surroundings, Midoriya set off to follow

the one path that he was unfamiliar with. It snaked around the main building. The two walked in silence as they headed towards several, rather large houses, emerging from the trees that lined the school.

Midoriya didn't falter as he marched straight towards the building marked *1-A – Heights Alliance.*

He did, however, when he reached the door.

The lights were on – he could hear the distant sound of gleeful chatter and booming laughter. Even a round of applause after a moment.

Midoriya's fist hovered before the door, ready to disturb that happiness within.

He took a deep breath, and he knocked.

Kaminari's acting skills *really* didn't deserve any kind of applause, but here they were.

He bowed clumsily, but somehow regally, to both teams. Honestly, Shinso wasn't sure how Kirishima had managed to realise *that* was meant to be donkey – but he could respect it.

"Ok, Shinso's team!" Yaoyorozu exclaimed, indicating towards their group.

"Go on, Raven; it's your go," Jiro grinned. She was obviously looking forwards to this.

He sighed exasperatingly, "Ok then…"

Putting his cup of coffee on the side beside Siren, he stood up and took centre stage. He picked up the first card from the pile –

Crab.

…Seriously?

He groaned loudly and put the card face down on the table. "You guys

have used your Quirks, am I allowed to use mine?"

The fact that no one immediately replied was more than suspicious.

Shinso grinned, "Come on, any takers?"

Kaminari stood up and saluted. "I volunteer."

He instantly fell under Shinso's power. Ordering him to walk towards him (without walking into the table), Shinso stepped close to Kaminari and whispered his instructions in his ear, "*Act like a crab."*

He wasn't surprised that Uraraka had borrowed Asui's phone to film the ordeal and was more than happy – because the result would have been the highlight of the night, if it weren't for certain later events.

Everyone was laughing so hard that they didn't even bother guessing, and Shinso had to save Kaminari, who had begun sidestepping frantically across the room, before he walked right into a wall.

They didn't hear the knocking at the door. What they *did* hear, was Siren.

Tweet!

Everyone stopped.

"Siren?" Uraraka frowned. "Hey, she… she made a noise!

The little green bird hopped out of her nest, acting more energetic than she had since… well, since the summer camp ended.

Tweet, tweet!

"Koda – what's she saying?" questioned Mina eagerly, forgetting about the game all together as she lent forwards to get a closer look at the bird.

But Koda's expression simply conveyed an apparent bewilderment.

Jiro suddenly jerked upright. "Someone's here," she said, and low and behold, a moment later, they heard it –

Knock, knock, knock.

The class fell silent again – everyone staring at the front door in confusion.

"…Who could that be at this hour?" wondered Yaoyorozu.

Shinso broke his hold on Kaminari as he, being the closest, approached the door.

"Huh? What happened?" Kaminari blinked, "Did it work?"

Shinso wasn't paying attention, because… well, he had a very strange feeling about this.

His hand reached towards the doorknob, which was where he wavered. He glanced back at the others. A few nodded encouragingly.

"It's probably just someone from class B," Kirishima supposed. "I *did* lend Tetsutetsu my maths book the other day – maybe he's here to give it back?"

Yeah, that seemed like a reasonable explanation.

Shinso shook off that weird feeling and pulled open the door.

Chapter End Notes

Insert that seagull laughing meme

The comment section:

ccccccccccclllllllllllLLLLL*LLLOOOOOOOOUUUUUUUUU**UUUUDDDDDDD*

WE'vE TAlKed AbOuT thE CLifFHAngERS!

Me: writes a massive freaking cliff-hanger anyway.

Yeah, I'm sorry, but I'm not physically or mentally capable of writing any more at the moment. It's this or nothing, take your pick.

Sorry not sorry

Please don't hate me

On to the art!

First up, we have a cool drawing from **Jaroo0707**, of Canary escaping the hand of villainy with Eri (for context, Discord has decided that Eri's bird name will be Bluebird) out of the dark and into the light!

Then there's littlemusic…meiyou, with a drawing of Raven this time!

Next we have a super good drawing of Canary singing by **HyperHazerdious**

Then **Thelovypop17** (can't have an art section without her) has done a really good rendition of Midoriya rescuing Eri at the end of the last chapter!

Finally, AmyStarSmith gives us a 'sad screm Siren'

The Reunion

Chapter Notes

> Guess who just got semi-fired from work just because they didn't want to work Christmas day in order to spend time with their sick Nan? That's right, me.
>
> Screw you, Scrooge.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shinso opened the door.

He frowned.

“Who’s there, Shinso?!” Uraraka called from across the room.

Shinso tore his gaze away from the empty space before him, “…No one – I don’t see anyone here,” he replied, his brow furrowed.

“I definitely heard a knock…” Jiro muttered to no one in particular.

“As did I,” Shoji nodded to her.

Shinso shook his head – maybe all these board games were getting to their heads. Or perhaps someone had decided to do a prank – knock on the underneath of a table to grab their attentions or something – maybe it really *was* a member of class 1-B, knocking and then fleeing in fits of giggles.

Shinso sighed and went to close the door again. It had been a long night. He was looking forward to it being over now.

But then something stopped the door from closing.

Shinso hesitated.

He stepped outside a little – was someone hiding behind the door?

Cautiously, he let go of the door, and let this hidden someone pull it, slowly but surely, further open.

And when Shinso saw the nervous, shivering person behind – well, he didn't know *what* to feel.

Finally, it was over.

Midoriya watched Shinso's face morph across every emotion in the human spectrum.

The chain slipped out from under his sleeve as he lifted his arm to wave hello. He vaguely acknowledged Eri's hand slipping from his own, in favour of hiding behind his leg and hugging it tightly. But right now, all he could really focus on was the moment he'd been *dreaming* of for the past half a month –

The reunion.

Midoriya's hand hovered there for a moment as Shinso just *stared*. His hands were over his mouth. He shook his head and took a few steps back in disbelief.

Midoriya had been rather scared, at second thought. Was he in the right place? What would they say, even if he was? What would they *do?* He'd backed away as the door creaked open. His heart was beating far too fast too be healthy as he ducked out of sight, pulling Eri along with him. But when he heard Shinso's voice – well, he couldn't just stay hidden any longer.

He felt the tears welling at his eyes as he lifted his other hand to *finally* communicate *properly* with someone, [*It's good to see you*] was what he signed to his friend.

"Err, Shinso?" someone called from inside the new dorm building. "Is everything ok?"

But Shinso didn't bother answering them.

Midoriya hesitated, unsure of what to do, [*Sorry for interrupting but I –*]

He didn't finish, because Shinso didn't let him. And now it was even *harder* to stop himself from crying, because Shinso most certainly *was* – over his shoulder as he hugged him tightly.

"*Shinso?!"* someone else yelled after him.

Shinso suddenly let go of Midoriya, walking backwards into the dorms with his hands pulling at his hair, still staring at Midoriya.

"What's going on?" the class, hidden just out of Midoriya's sight, persisted to question.

Again, Shinso didn't reply, but instead, broke into a brilliant smile and swore at the top of his voice, "No, no, no – this isn't happening. No *freaking WAY!"*

After a moment of shocked silence, Midoriya couldn't help but laugh.

Shinso tried to rub the tears away from his eyes, but to no avail, "D-Don't laugh at me you bastard."

But he didn't stop; he was just so *happy*.

And the moment got even *better* – when from around the corner, a little creature rocketed towards him, stopping inches from Midoriya's face and chirped loudly.

'Siren!' he thought with an unbridled glee. Midoriya held his hands out for her to land upon and stroked the top of her tiny head with his finger fondly.

It wasn't long before curiosity got the better of class 1-A, but the first around the corner to peer out the door, was Kaminari.

His jaw practically dropped to the ground, "Holy smokes – *Canary?!"*

“WHAT?!” was the chorus from within the dorms.

There was the sound of scraping chairs and the thunder of footsteps, as Kaminari reached out and pulled Midoriya inside, with Eri scampering along behind him nervously.

Midoriya turned around and closed the doors. He didn’t know why – but the feeling of having them shut behind him was somewhat… comforting.

“CANARY!” Jiro cried. She was the next to literally throw herself in Midoriya’s direction, being a little less secretive about her sobs. Midoriya was forced to toss Siren into the air so she wouldn’t be squished between them.

There was a mixture of reactions across the class. Of course, Midoriya still didn’t really know all of them incredibly well, since he never had the chance to spend much time with them during the summer camp, but his sudden appearance still seemed to have quite the effect on them.

Whilst others hung back, mouths agape, many began to cry. Shinso seemed so distraught that he was now sitting on the floor, his head in his hands. Jiro’s mascara had started to run down her face already, but she didn’t seem to take any notice. Iida had to hold onto the side of the kitchen counter as he hung his head, also crying. Then there was Uraraka, who had joined in on what was becoming a group hug now, sobbing almost as loudly as Jiro, if that were possible. Then there was Todoroki, who just stood there, too shocked to move. Kacchan seemed to be doing the same, standing right at the back of the group and *staring*.

“WHAT THE HELL?!” Shinso eventually screamed as the others began to pull away from the embrace. He grasped Midoriya’s shoulders and repeated those words, “What. The. *Hell?”*

Midoriya just sniffed loudly, his vision blurry as he waved hello again.

But then Shinso’s eyes zeroed in on the chain on his wrist. He backed away a little. “O-Ok, let’s… let’s get that off –”

Iida walked over and put one hand on Midoriya’s shoulder, “I’m going to find Mr Aizawa. They were having a staff meeting.”

Midoriya nodded – but didn’t let him go without a quick hug too.

Iida's glasses were all steamed up as he left, taking off at a run with the aid of his Quirk.

"Come on," Shinso insisted, grabbing his arm to lead him towards the seating area – the dorms seemed quite nice. But they didn't get that far, because Midoriya pulled away as he met Eri's worried gaze, as she still hung onto his leg.

Midoriya pointed down at her, and the gases of his classmates slowly lowered to her level.

"Who is…?" began Mina, before trailing off.

Yaoyorozu crouched down to her. Eri backed away a little, hiding behind Midoriya.

"Hello there," said Yaoyorozu, "and who might you be?"

Eri was hesitant – glancing up at Midoriya, who gave her a swift nod. "E-Eri," she stammered.

"Hello, Eri," Yaoyorozu smiled, "I'm Yaoyorozu – but you can call me Momo."

Eri held her hands close to her chest as she glanced between them all. It was probably a little overwhelming for her. "A-Are you Canary's friends?"

Yaoyorozu blinked at her, "Y-Yes. Yes, we are."

Eri pointed up at Midoriya determinedly, "H-He needs help. He's hurt; he can't talk… I-I-I can't h-help him…"

There was a moment of silence as either the others tried to deduce what she meant or frowned at Midoriya with worry. Of course, they could have easily concluded that he wasn't talking because, well, he often didn't anyways – but the bandages sticking out underneath his surgical mask was a bit of a giveaway for those who were capable of noticing them, despite their debilitating emotions.

"Can we just…" Shinso started, rubbing the rest of the tears away from his eyes, "Can we just sit down? Y-You need to explain – *please."*

Midoriya picked at his bandages nervously as he nodded. Honestly, he'd been so focused on *getting to UA*, that he hadn't at all considered what would happen after this initial wave of relief.

So, the class cautiously started to migrate back to the sitting area. Midoriya followed them whilst making sure Eri was coming too. He *did* notice he hadn't ended up taking his shoes off, but even as he swerved to turn around and do just that, Shinso grabbed a hold of his shoulders again and steered him towards a sofa, plonking him right in the middle.

Eri, a little confused about the whole ordeal, ended up sitting with Yaoyorozu on the armchair next to the sofa.

"I can't believe you're here," Jiro wheezed as she accepted a tissue from Yaoyorozu, dabbing at her running makeup, only to make it worse. "W-We thought you were *dead*," she wept, sitting down next to him, on the other side to Shinso.

Midoriya cocked his head to one side. Well, it was expected, of course – Overhaul had thought the same thing. But then there was what Midoriya had heard over the radio…

So, with singing being something beyond his current capabilities, he resorted to the next best thing, and he hummed the chorus of the song he'd heard her sing, staring at the ceiling and swinging his legs back and forth as he did so, trying not to think about what *else* had happened on the day that this music had reached his ears.

"You… heard?" Uraraka realised, her hands over her mouth.

Midoriya smiled beneath his mask and nodded.

"They gave you a radio…" Todoroki concluded, retrieving a discarded cup of coffee from the side of the – *hey, is that Siren's nest?*

Midoriya picked it up as the bird in question finished her loop-de-loops around the room and settled down in it.

"Midoriya –" He turned his head back to Shinso – his face was all red and his eyes bloodshot after his tears, "How did you *get* here?"

"Oh!" he exclaimed, passing the nest to Shinso and delving into his pockets again to reveal his phone. He carefully removed the ruined device from the case, and then flashed the three cards hidden behind it to the others.

Shinso took each of them from him in turn, frowning at them. "You got into UA with your ID… No, I-I got that but just… How – *How*…?"

Midoriya blinked at him for a moment, before pointing to his train card once more.

He stared at him, “You took the *train?!”*

Midoriya let out a small laugh and nodded.

“But from where?” questioned Todoroki, perching on the arm of the sofa, beside Shinso.

“Um…” Midoriya started, [*About an hour from UA*]

“You were *an hour* away?!” Shinso exclaimed.

“You were so close…” Jiro realised, covering her face with her hands again. “But no one ever found you…” she sobbed.

Midoriya just hugged her again – hopefully conveying that it was *ok*.

“W-We need to get that chain off,” Jiro insisted after feeling the cold metal against her skin.

“Right,” Shinso nodded, “Err… how do we do that?”

“I can do it,” insisted Todoroki. He hurried forwards and examined the cuff. “Sato, I’m going to melt through the metal, and then freeze it as soon as I can so it won’t hurt Midoriya – can you pull it apart as I do this?”

Sato, with the strength enhancing ability, nodded confidently. He pulled a singular sugar cube from his pocket – the fuel for his power, as he stepped forwards and grasped the sides of the metal, “Ok, go now!”

Todoroki’s left hand glowed with fire as he carefully begun to heat the metal.

In a slight fear that it would accidently burn him, Midoriya winced and looked away. But after a surprising increase in temperature, quickly followed by a drop so drastic that he let out a gasp – there was the distinct sound of snapping metal. The cuff fractured and fell into two clean pieces, breaking at where Todoroki had melted into it, and through the seam on the other side. Once free, Midoriya rubbed at the skin that had been hidden under it in utter relief. Todoroki took the chain out of Midoriya’s sight – and he was happy for it.

There were a few minutes of silence after that, whilst everyone

exchanged nervous whispers, tried to comfort Midoriya or just stood there, lost in their thoughts.

“How did you get away from them?” that was Kacchan. Everyone turned to stare at him for a moment, a strange mixture of emotions on their expressions.

Midoriya tried to ignore it as he turned to Shinso to sign an explanation, relishing in the improved mobility of his wrist, [*I’ve gotten out quite a few times, actually. This was just the only time I got lucky enough for it to be successful*]

“You’ve gotten out before?” was all Shinso translated. “How many times?”

“Err…” Midoriya frowned, thinking back to how many times he’d managed to flee, including that night’s happenings, [*Six, I believe*]

“You got out *six times?”*

“But… What made this time any different?” questioned Mina. She was curled up on the sofa opposite him now, in her pyjamas, the wet on her cheeks making her pink skin glisten strangely in the light.

Midoriya nodded towards the little, rag-clad girl by Yaoyorozu, “Eri,” he managed; it was a nice, simple name. [*I had to get her out*]

Another, brief moment of silence followed. It was Mina who broke it with a cry of frustration through her heavy sobs. Midoriya flinched dramatically at it as she spoke.

“Oh, come on, *please* – speak to us!” Mina begged. “I-I know you find it hard sometimes, and I understand b-but y-you’re saying bits and pieces and I just want to understand what –”

“Don’t force him,” Shinso snapped protectively.

“I’m not!” protested Mina.

“But… he can’t…” Everyone turned back to Eri, “He can’t speak…” she whispered, trailing off as she gazed into Midoriya’s eyes.

“Midoriya – what happened?” asked Todoroki, wavering with his question, as he glanced between him and Shinso, as if unsure if asking was pushing any limits.

Midoriya hesitated – he didn’t want to make them worry…

“Your face,” interjected Kacchan, walking a little closer to him, but still hovering at the edge of the group. He glanced at the others as their stares returned to him. He ended up focusing his gaze on Midoriya, “Shigaraki… did something to you – back at Kamino.”

Midoriya had almost forgotten that Kacchan had seen it happen. He was just so relieved to see that he really had made it out ok – that *everyone* had – him included. However, there was still one, rather major problem…

Shinso turned back to him with wide eyes, “Can you… speak at all?”

Midoriya did nothing for a moment but stare back at him, a lump rising in his throat. His hand twitched at the thought of reaching up and undoing his bandages, to show them all what had really happened, but… he couldn’t bring himself to do it. Instead, he just lowered his head, staring at his feet.

He should have taken his shoes off – he’d traipsed some mud in with him…

In the corner of his eye, he saw Shinso hesitantly reach out to pat him on the shoulder or something – but he decided against it; his hand just hovered there instead.

Midoriya didn’t even realise he was crying until he saw the tears drip down onto his shoes.

It was in that moment that the front door was thrown open again. Midoriya didn’t look up; he only heard it; saw when Mr Aizawa’s black boots appear before him, and he crouched down to look him in the eyes.

Midoriya tried not to reach his gaze, simply staring unblinkingly at the floor.

The others tried to explain to him in hushed voices what had happened. Midoriya paid little attention.

“Midoriya, we’re going to go up to Recovery Girl,” Mr Aizawa insisted after a moment, “and we’ll see where we go from there.”

He stood up again and, with more confidence than Shinso, put his hand on Midoriya’s shoulder, pulling him to his feet firmly. But before they went any further, Mr Aizawa sighed and knelt down again, positioning himself so he was right in Midoriya’s line of vision.

“Alright there, Problem Child?” it was a trivial question. Of course, he wasn’t alright – how could he be? He had been so happy to be back; to be out; to be *safe* – but… now? Now, it had really dawned on him – nothing would ever be the same again.

Midoriya nodded.

Siren flew from her nest, that Shinso had moved from his lap at some point, and landed on top of Midoriya’s head. He smiled, trying to push all these negative thoughts away for just a little longer.

Eri hurried over to him, grasping his hand again as Mr Aizawa led them back towards the door. He opened it, letting the cool night air drift inside.

There was a nagging thought in the back of Midoriya’s mind –

Stay here – here is safe – don’t go outside – don’t go outside!

“Shinso,” Mr Aizawa called, and Midoriya blinked, tearing his eyes away from the open door and back to his teacher. “You know sign language, could you come with us for a while?”

“Of course,” Shinso replied, seemingly trying to keep the enthusiasm out of his tone as he hurried over to them and pulled on his shoes.

Midoriya waved goodbye to the others glumly as he left, and Eri did too.

“Wait!” Uraraka suddenly called. She ran forwards, tapping something into her flip phone – which she promptly thrust into Midoriya’s free hand. “I’ve taken the passcode off – I-I know it’s not a *great* phone, but this way you can talk to us!”

Midoriya smiled and gently tucked the pink device into his hoody pocket, only to be painfully reminded that the jumper used to belong to whichever villain through it at him when he got too cold in just a T-shirt and shorts. Honestly, he was rather looking forward to disposing of it. Maybe just straight up *burning* it…

[*Thank you*] he signed, something that Uraraka had come to recognise over the amount of times that he had used the sign for her.

And after one last hug, he left them behind again, and trudged back down that path, all the way to the main UA building.

Glancing over his shoulder a few times, he could see them all at the door, silhouetted against the warm light of the dorms, watching him leave as quickly as he'd arrived.

They were silent as they walked. Eri was almost jogging to keep up at times. Her little legs were taking far too many strides to just one of Midoriya's, and *he* was shorter than both Mr Aizawa and Shinso, who insisted on moving at a rather fast pace towards Recovery Girl's office, not that Midoriya minded much.

Consequently, they arrived rather quickly, and Mr Aizawa knocked hastily on the door.

"I told Recovery Girl that she might need to be expecting us," he explained as they heard her footsteps approach the door, "But Iida didn't explain that the problem at 1-A was *you* until we were about halfway there."

The door swung open, only to reveal the short stature of yet another kind face that Midoriya was more than happy to see again.

"Oh dear," were Recovery Girl's first words to him since the Sports Festival. "What a pleasant surprise!" she continued after an awkward minute of shocked silence between the group. "Come in, come in!"

Midoriya urged Eri to be checked over first, lifting her up onto the bed as Midoriya sat down beside her.

"And what would your name be?" questioned Recovery Girl. Midoriya admired her ability to remain so *calm*.

"E-Eri," she stammered.

"How old are you, Eri?"

She hesitated, as if unsure, "S-Six…"

"Oh! A big strong girl like you must already have her Quirk already then," the nurse smiled, reaching out to unravel the bandages on Eri's arms.

But Eri flinched and pulled away, shuffling back towards Midoriya. "M-M-My Quirk is b-bad," she whimpered.

Midoriya blinked at her. He hadn't actually considered why Overhaul

had her captive in the first place, but he was pretty convinced it wasn't because she was his daughter. Could it have been to do with her Quirk – whatever it was? He frowned; Overhaul had been very protective over Eri when she appeared before Midoriya – but not in a good way. She must have been an integral part of his plans…

"Midoriya, where did Eri come from?" Mr Aizawa interrogated.

Eager to explain, Midoriya turned to Shinso, [*Be careful what you translate; I don't want to frighten her*]

Shinso nodded.

[*I don't know who Eri is; I only met her today*] Midoriya continued. [*I had tried to flee, but ultimately failed, until she ran into me. She was running from a second group of villains – other than the League. They'd had some… clashes – whilst I was with them. It didn't end well. I didn't trust them, and the League didn't either. There was a fight and Eri was scared; I used the confusion to escape with her*]

With a frown and another nod, Shinso turned to Mr Aizawa and Recovery Girl and repeated everything he thought necessary, which was a good majority of it, but as promised, was cautious enough with his wording as to not set Eri off.

"We'll have to settle this matter at another time, with the police," Mr Aizawa sighed, "You too, Midoriya. I have a feeling you have a rather long story to tell."

Midoriya gulped and nodded, not feeling too keen to tell it.

Recovery Girl turned to Midoriya, "Now then, how are you feeling, young man? Is anything the matter physically?"

Midoriya twiddled his thumbs together, avoiding her gaze.

"He can't speak," Eri piped up. "He's hurt."

"Ok then, dearie – shall we take a look? It's your mouth, yes?"

Midoriya glanced over at Shinso. He wasn't sure if he wanted him to see just yet. But…

[*You might not want to let Bluebird see this*] Midoriya signed.

"Blue –" he began, but then glanced at Eri. Her petite figure and the blue-grey colour of her hair. Shinso smiled, despite it all. He turned to

Mr Aizawa and whispered Midoriya's request to him.

"You like cats, Eri?" Mr Aizawa said, raising an eyebrow.

"…Cats?" Eri repeated with a frown.

"Come on, let's see some pictures of my cat. His name's Sushi." And so, Mr Aizawa took Eri's hand and led her to the other side of the office, pulling across a pale blue curtain to separate them from the rest of the group. The quite chatter between him and Eri filled the background.

Midoriya sighed and lifted his hands to his face, keeping an eye on Shinso the entire time. He took off his surgical mask and tossed it to one side, before picking at the bandages, finally locating an end, and slowly but surely, undoing them…

Recovery Girl took one look and then turned around to locate a torch. Shinso just stared.

Midoriya had his eyes closed now – refusing to take in the expression on Shinso's face for a moment longer. He felt… weirdly ashamed by it.

"Ok, Midoriya," Recovery Girl continued, "This looks surprisingly clean – not infected at all. That's good to see. Does it hurt much when you move your mouth?"

It did, from time to time. But Midoriya just shrugged.

"Well, I wouldn't worry too much about it," Recovery Girl sighed, turning off her torch now that she had done examining the darkened corners of his closed mouth. "It is fortunately something that could be fixed after surgery, and you will be able to speak again without any problem."

Midoriya shook his head, tears brimming at his eyes. He pointed back at his mouth and opened it slowly.

Frowning, Recovery Girl turned her torch back on and peered inside. "Ah," was all she said initially.

Midoriya had his eyes shut tight, refusing to open them to see the reactions on their faces. Because he could hear Shinso's sharp inhalation. He knew he had seen it too – the state of his tongue.

“Yes, that could… prove a little more problematic,” Recovery Girl admitted after clearing her throat.

Midoriya closed his mouth, and cautiously opened his eyes. He took one look at the *horror* across Shinso’s expression and had to avert them again.

Midoriya reached for his surgical mask again to hide his wounds, only for Recovery Girl to snatch it off him and toss it in a bin. She rummaged through her drawers and replaced it with a new one, coloured light blue. “It defeats the purpose if it’s not *clean*,” she insisted.

He nodded and pulled it over his head, tucking the straps behind his ears. This one was bigger; it fit better, and concealed the entirety of his damaged cheek, without having to use bandages to cover the rest of it up.

“Mr Aizawa?” Recovery Girl called out.

He pulled the curtain aside instantly.

“I’m going to contact the hero hospital. He may have to stay there for a few days,” she explained.

Mr Aizawa nodded as Eri hurried back over to Midoriya.

“He has a cat and he’s big and fluffy,” she announced. Her enthusiasm was apparent, yet she lacked a smile on her face. It was like she was stating a fact, more than just being excited about a cute cat.

Midoriya smiled for her and nodded.

“Can… I show you?” she asked.

Midoriya nodded again as she shuffled up beside her. Mr Aizawa sighed as he handed over his phone so Eri could flick through the pictures contently.

For the next… however long it was, that was all they did – look at cats. Shinso sat next to them too – and the thought of the future was lost to the backs of their minds.

Mr Aizawa had announced that he would leave them in the care of Recovery Girl whilst he went and explained the situation to the rest of the teachers. So, perhaps Midoriya should have expected what

happened next.

The door creaked open again. Midoriya thought it was just Mr Aizawa returning. He looked up, expecting him to say that their transport to the hospital was here and that he would need his phone back, but instead –

“Hey there, little co-host…”

– It was Present Mic.

They stared at each other for a moment.

Midoriya smiled and waved at him, [*Hello, Cockatoo*] he signed whilst trying not to cry.

And gradually, a smile spread across his teacher’s face.

“Ok,” sighed Mr Aizawa, “Since Mic knows sign, he’ll be accompanying Midoriya and Eri to the hospital.”

“Wait, can’t I come too?” protested Shinso as he got to his feet.

Mr Aizawa hesitated, taking his phone back off his student, “I’m sorry, Shinso, but… this is serious. There needs to be a police investigation and, from what it sounds like, maybe even surgery. You’ll have to stay here.”

“Come on, C-Canary!” Present Mic exclaimed, reaching forwards to grab his shoulder. Which is when he broke down – the tears seeping out from underneath his hero costume’s sunglasses.

Midoriya just grinned sadly and hugged the hero.

“I’m sorry we couldn’t save you,” he whispered.

Midoriya just buried his face in his jacket, unable to reply. He… wasn’t sure if he could have thought of what to say, even if he could.

“Let’s go,” Present Mic insisted after a moment longer, patting Midoriya on the back.

And so, not long after he had arrived, Midoriya left UA in the back of

an ambulance, an unease brewing within him. Perhaps it was just paranoia, but from the window, he could have sworn he saw faces in the shadows – familiar ones, waiting for him.

“Canary,” Present Mic rested his hand on Midoriya’s shoulder; it made him flinch. “Hey, it’s alright; you’re safe now!”

Midoriya glanced over at Eri –

Thoughts of a dangerous Quirk – a man who used it to his advantage. Then of that bullet… the golden ones fired at Magne and Compress not so long ago – those which erased Quirks.

He raised his hand to his cheek, his exposed teeth brushing against the inside of the new surgical mask. He thought of the man who took his voice; his power; his *future*…

No –

– this wasn’t over yet.

Chapter End Notes

If you’re confused with where I’m taking this story at the moment, please read on:

Cast your mind all the way back to chapter one. Think about how Midoriya acts in that radio show segment, based *after* all the subsequent events written here. This is a much more confident, happy individual who is *still* nothing like the Midoriya we have at the moment. The Midoriya *here* is confused, scared and still rather timid – only being brought out into the light by the constant attention and his willingness to be around his friends. Thus, we still have some character development to go before we reach our goal.

Before Canary can get his voice back – he needs to come to terms

with what it is like to be truly muted and think about how he dealt with his *selective* muteness before.

Before Canary can get his Quirk back – he needs to understand what his Quirklessness meant to him, and how others treated him for it; how he didn't fight back.

He needs to fix his problems with a *mental* muteness now that he has a *physical* muteness.

He needs to fix his problems with *'inherited'* Quirklessness now that he has *induced* Quirklessness.

Only once these conditions are fulfilled we can move on, and a Midoriya who is far more sure of himself and his abilities can be formed. Yes, contrary to popular belief, I do have a plan and hopefully it will work the way I want it to…

First up for the art edition of this chapter is 101 again! And she's done a really good doodle of poor Shinso feeling rather sad D:

Then **SunsetAnimations** did this super cool drawing of Eri and Midoriya on the train home!

And **Thelovypop17** drew Midoriya's and Eri's return

Finally, Frost Nova's giving us a blast from the past with an *amazing* rendition of Midoriya singing Wings at the Sports Festival!

The Next Move

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hero In Training, Canary, Returns From The Dead!

Sixteen days ago, Izuku Midoriya, otherwise known as the radio star and hero in training, Canary, who took second place in this year's first year UA Sports Festival, was kidnapped by a notorious group of criminals known as the League of Villains, during a UA summer training camp as part of Canary's transfer from UA's general studies department to the hero course. Questions were raised about students' safety at the prestigious school, which consequently prompted them to initiate moving their students into a dorm system on campus.

That is where, last night, Canary arrived, much to the shock of his classmates and teachers, alongside a young girl that Canary claimed to have also been held captive by a different group of villains who have yet to be identified. Both are now being kept in an undisclosed location to assess their injuries and keep them under protection as police investigations continue.

However, due to a debilitating injury, received during the Kamino Attack that resulted in the retirement of our long-standing number one hero, All Might, Canary may have been rendered permanently mute.

What does this mean for our young hero, with a powerful Quirk that requires his voice to activate?

Will UA be permitting him to remain in the hero course regardless of this turn of events?

How does Canary feel about the failure of the heroes and police department, on their inability to rescue him, despite him being kept only an hour's train ride from UA?

Subscribe to our newsletter to find out and read more on this breaking

story.

One day since the return

"Now, in terms of the hole in your cheek…" Dr Imai continued, tapping his pen on the side of his clipboard. "We can most certainly fix it. It is a substantial loss of tissue, but skin grafting may still be a liable option."

Midoriya's mother squeezed his hand. She was sitting by his bed side, holding back tears, despite them leaking from her face consistently ever since she got the phone call that Midoriya was alive and safe in the hospital.

"Your tongue, however…" the doctor sighed. "It's comparable to losing a limb – there isn't just a small piece of muscle missing. A good majority of it has been completely disintegrated. Frankly, it's a miracle you didn't suffer from significant blood loss, although we have been led to believe that is as a result of the villain's Quirk."

"B-But will he ever be able to speak a-again?" Inko stammered, shuffling even closer to the bed on her creaky chair.

Dr Imai hesitated, but then nodded firmly. "With speech theory, time and practise. You will be able to speak again, with only a slight impediment in terms of certain sounds that are difficult to produce without a tongue. I'm afraid only you can know what this means in terms of your Quirk."

Midoriya nodded in understanding.

"I've seen people with tongue cancers who have had as much of their tongue removed as you, and they have, after a few years, managed to reach a point in their conversational levels where they can get their point across without too much trouble."

Midoriya just nodded again. It wasn't quite what he was hoping to hear, but he knew it was coming, regardless.

"Something else we can do is give you a kind of *phantom* tongue," the

doctor offered. “You do still have a slight bit of muscle remaining, and through surgery we could construct a tongue which you can’t move around much but can at least slightly. It would *look* like the real thing, or at least close enough, and could be slightly beneficial in eating.” He cleared his throat again.

The doctor spoke rather slowly, in a dreary manner. It made Midoriya feel impatient; he just wanted him to *get to the point.*

“You see, we use our tongues for more things than just speaking. We need it to obviously taste, but to also move food around our mouths when eating, and also to swallow. As I said, your tongue isn’t completely missing and you seem to be able to drink and swallow ok, but… whatever we do, eating is going to prove a bit of a challenge when faced with certain foods.”

Midoriya already knew this, from trying to eat the food that the villains supplied him with. It was messy and Midoriya was honestly a little embarrassed by it. But there really wasn’t anything he could do…

“Other than that, and the slight abrasion on your wrist where the cuff had been, you’ve only got a few scratches and bruises. We can keep you here until surgery for your face, but since it’s a rather stable injury and isn’t life threatening, you have been put on a waiting list,” explained Dr Imai.

“How long will it take?” pressed Inko, squeezing Midoriya’s hand a little harder.

He sighed, pushing his wired glasses further up his nose, “Well, waiting lists can become rather long, especially with the increased villain activities these days… But with your… *status* – you’re fortunate enough to be pushed up the priority list. I can say two weeks at the absolute maximum.”

Inko dithered, but eventually nodded, “I – *we* – we understand. Thank you for your help.”

Nodding again, he got to his feet. He opened the door, but hesitated by it, glancing back at Midoriya. “I’m… sorry that this happened to you.” And he left.

Midoriya stared at the wall for a moment, until he heard his mother’s sniffs and sobs. “*Mum* –” he managed, which made her breath hitch.

She turned to look at him, her eyes wide and watery.

Midoriya pulled his hand from her grasp, [*I'm ok*]

"B-But you're *not*, Izuku!" she wailed. "Y-You were getting so much better… You were *speaking* again and *now* look… I-I'm so sorry!"

[*Mum, please – it's ok. I can figure something out – please don't cry, please…*]

But she wasn't looking at his hands – nothing he could sign would get through to her. He sighed. All he could do was pull her into a hug, and relish in her company.

Aria in the Aviary!

Dove: *Hi.*

Owl: *Hi, Canary! Are you ok?*

Owl: *(Uraraka says hi too)*

Dove: *Yeah, I'm fine.*

Raven: *What happened?*

Dove: *What makes you think anything happened?*

Raven: *In terms of like, doctor talk.*

Owl: *Doctor talk?*

Raven: *You know what I mean.*

Dove: *Um, yeah. I guess it could have gone better.*

Crane: *Tensei will be coming in for a check-up soon. Perhaps we could meet you then?*

Dove: *Yeah that would be great!*

Dove: *I don't know how long I have to stay here. It might end up being a while.*

Owl: *Because of the investigations?*

Dove: *Something like that.*

Dove: *Oh, and I'm on some kind of waiting list for surgery.*

Dove: *Mum's finalising the details of what they're actually going to do.*

Raven: *Are they going to be able to fix it?*

Dove: *Bits and pieces.*

Dove: *Talking's going to be… another problem.*

Raven: *Nothing new there then.*

Dove: *No… I suppose not.*

Puffin: *Is Siren with you?*

Dove: *She was a second ago.*

Dove: *The nurses keep trying to kick her out. She keeps reappearing.*

Owl: *I bet she's enjoying that.*

Dove: *Oh, definitely.*

"Is that who I think it is?"

Midoriya looked up from his – well, Uraraka's – phone, only to see a rather familiar face by the doorway.

"Hey there, Izuku," his dad smiled.

Midoriya tossed off the covers of his hospital bed, leapt out and threw himself at Hisashi.

The smell of smoke from his fire breathing Quirk, and the poor deodorant he always used to try and cover it, up filled his nostrils as he buried his face in his chest and smiled.

His dad hugged him back tightly. "It's been way too long since we saw each other in the flesh – I'm *so sorry*."

Midoriya just hugged him tighter. He'd had enough of apologies.

"When I heard you were back, I took the first plane they could get me!" he exclaimed. "I'm *so* glad you're ok."

Midoriya wiped a tear from his eye, [*I'm glad you're here*]

“Me too, songbird,” he grinned. “Now come on, I think we have a bit of an appointment booked today.”

[*An appointment?*] Midoriya frowned.

“With the principal of UA,” he said with raised eyebrows. “We thought we’d get this bit over and done with before we all properly spent the day together.”

Midoriya nodded unsurely. He didn’t have a good feeling about this.

Adjusting his surgical mask to ensure his injury was properly hidden, Midoriya followed his father out of his hospital room and down the winding corridors.

“Now, I’ve been listening to every single one of those radio shows of yours!” Hisashi announced. “And I’ve shown them to my colleagues at work too! But they don’t believe you’re my son, which is honestly offensive!” he laughed as they walked down the stairs, Midoriya gazing up at him with starry eyes. “Can’t they see the resemblance? No – probably not. You take too much after your mother. Apparently freckles aren’t enough to go on to prove a family relationship.”

Midoriya laughed, skipping down a couple of steps at a time. [*Maybe me having such a weird Quirk makes them doubt*]

“You know, that’s probably it,” he agreed. “Where’d that come from, huh? You should have seen my face when your mother called me up to say that you’ve found your Quirk by *setting fire to the sky!”*

[*It was just the rain*]

“You say that like it’s a trivial thing to do! Which to you, I suppose it is,” Hisashi sighed fondly. “Anyway, here we are! They gave us a special meeting room, isn’t that nice of them?”

He pushed open the door to reveal a rather small, disused office, which had boxes of papers shoved into every corner, around a circular table, at which Midoriya’s mother sat beside Principal Nedzu, her hands shaking as she picked up a cup of green tea.

“We’re here!” Hisashi announced, taking the chair closest to them and encouraging Midoriya to sit between him and Inko.

“Hello, Izuku! Lovely to see you again!” Principal Nedzu smiled, putting down his own cup of tea to offer some to the two newcomers,

which they graciously accepted, but Midoriya had no plans on actually trying to drink any. “When Mr Aizawa came to tell us that the commotion at class A’s dorms was not any ordinary incident, but *your* arrival, I have to say that I was more than pleasantly surprised! But on behalf of the heroes that failed to come to your aid when you needed it the most, I must apologise. What happened to you was horrific and completely unacceptable. I hope that we can help you now, in any way we can, in *any* attempt, to make up for that.”

Midoriya wasn’t quite sure what to say, or, sign – so instead, he simply bowed to show his gratitude.

“I’m also sorry for all these formalities and meetings that you’ve had to sit through over the past day,” Nedzu sighed. “You must just want to spend some time with your family and friends. So, I hope we can finish this business as soon as possible.”

Midoriya nodded. Honestly, a *nod* was his go-to response at the moment…

“Izuku,” his mum began in a small voice. “W-We’ve all been talking for a while now, and, well – I-I don’t think you should go back to UA after this.”

Midoriya’s eyes grew wide, [*Wait, no – Mum!*]

“Izuku, it’s too dangerous – look what’s happened to you!”

His dad put his hand on Midoriya’s shoulder. “We just don’t want you to get hurt like this again,” he insisted, the initial enthusiasm of their reunion gone from his voice.

[*And then what?*] Midoriya signed with frustrated, choppy movements. [*I go to another school – How do you know that’s going to be any safer?*]

His mum held back another sob, “I’m s-sorry but –”

“No!” Midoriya cried, standing up and pushing his chair back. But it didn’t come out right; he couldn’t make all the sounds properly. [*I’ve had enough apologies!*]

“Izuku, please sit down, you’re making your mother upset,” Hisashi acknowledged, grabbing his wrist, where the bandages covered the marks the cuff left behind.

Midoriya sat down. He hadn’t meant to get so angry – he just… he’d

had enough.

“Although my paws make me incapable of sign language myself, I took the liberty to begin learning the language a few months ago,” Nedzu explained. “And I must agree with Izuku. He is now very well-known across Japan, if not the world. At UA, we will be able to protect him, due to the constant presence of our heroic staff members. He would be in the dorms as well – no villains would be able to come close to him again.”

[*And I can protect myself, Mum*] Midoriya added, not looking any of them in the eye as he signed. [*Haven’t I proven that?*]

“You most certainly have,” Nedzu nodded. “Which brings me to another question. If you were to remain at UA, would you complete your transfer to heroics, or move back to general studies?”

Midoriya hesitated. He hadn’t thought of that.

“General studies,” his mother insisted. “Y-You realise… you don’t have your Quirk anymore, Izuku.”

Midoriya instinctively reached up to his jaw line, his fingers hovering above the hole in his cheek that his mask hid from view.

Midoriya’s dad put a firm hand on his shoulder. “My boy didn’t have a good time at his old schools,” he said. “He has made friends at UA that have *changed* his *life*. If moving back to general studies will compromise that, I don’t want it to happen.”

“B-But Hisashi –”

“But there’s still a chance he could speak again!” he insisted. “And we’re still not sure his Quirk is completely beyond his reach!”

“I have a proposition,” interjected Principal Nedzu.

The bickering couple blinked at him expectantly.

“We could keep your son with class 1-A – in their dorms and in a majority of their lessons. When the rest of them are busy with hero training, however, Izuku could focus on speech therapy or other activities, perhaps joining class 1-C again in times when the timetabling proves problematic,” Nedzu suggested. “Does that not fulfil both your wishes?”

It took a moment, but eventually, they looked to each other, and nodded.

[*So, am I staying at UA?*] Midoriya questioned.

"…If that's what you want, Izuku," Inko confirmed with the slightest hesitation.

Midoriya raised his hands to sign again. He stared at his fingers for a moment, thinking carefully through what he would say, [*If… If I never went to UA. I would have spent the rest of my life mute and Quirkless. I suppose, either way – I was always going to end up like this, mute… and Quirkless. That's not UA's fault. Because the real difference UA gave me…*] he looked up at Principal Nedzu, and thought back to the acceptance letter he had sent him, before all of this began:

– But let us promise you that we will not let you down…

He supposed, they didn't – after all.

[*…was hope.*]

Three days since the return

"CANARY'S BACK!" Uraraka yelled across the dorms. Her face had been pressed against the window, waiting for his figure to appear on the path to Height's Alliance, his suitcase rolling along behind him.

Jiro was the first to reach the door. She threw it open before Midoriya was even *close*. "YO, CANARY!" she shouted.

He waved at her, continuing at his leisurely pace towards the dorms.

Shinso sighed. He should probably get up too…

The girls dragged him inside, with Siren doing circles around their

heads at way too high a speed for such a little creature – or any sized creature, for that matter.

“Ah, my phone!” Uraraka exclaimed as Midoriya handed it back to her, struggling to take off his shoes at the same time. “Thank you! I hope you didn’t get any calls from my parents whilst you had it…”

Midoriya shook his head, and then pulled a different phone from his back pocket.

“Oh, you got a new one?” asked Jiro, and Midoriya nodded in reply. “Oh – *nice*. You need a phone case though. Wait, is this the same model as mine? I have an old case if you want it!”

[*Thank you!*]

“No problem!” Jiro grinned, clearly happy that she had at least figured that bit of sign language out.

Midoriya caught Shinso’s gaze, [*What are you doing?*]

Shinso just blinked at him, he’d never managed to get up from his slumped position across the sofa. “I’m dead.”

“Great, then you won’t mind if I…” Jiro started, walking over with the very obvious intention of jumping on him.

“You’d sit on a corpse?” Shinso groaned.

“If it’s yours.” And she did just that.

“*Ow* – Midoriya – *save me…”*

[*I thought you were dead?*] Midoriya signed back to him as Jiro elbowed him in the face.

“I will be in a minute – Jiro weighs a ton.”

“I DO NOT!” she cried, and immediately smacked him around the head with a pillow.

“Have you seen your room yet?” Iida questioned, walking right past the situation with Jiro and Shinso. Jiro had gotten up now and Shinso had just rolled onto the floor.

Midoriya frowned and shook his head. According to his messages, he knew that his parents had dropped off the stuff he wanted to bring

with him to UA earlier that day. Then he'd accompanied them to the airport to say goodbye to his father, who lived and worked in America, and finally went straight to the school. He hadn't been back since he appeared that Wednesday evening. Now it was Saturday, and most of the students of UA were still at lunch. Excluding them, of course.

"Then let's go!" Uraraka said eagerly, grabbing Midoriya's last suitcase, accidently making it float and hurrying ahead of them, up the stairs rather than the lift. Which was her mistake.

"Are you coming, Shinso?" questioned Iida.

Shinso would have stood up if Jiro didn't just walk right over him, "Yeah…" he wheezed.

But Midoriya's laugh made it *worth it.*

"You said you had some kind of witness statement to make to the police?" Shinso remembered as he finally got to his feet, wobbling towards the elevator beside Midoriya and the others.

He nodded, [*I'm glad I got it over and done with*]

It was a little too quiet as Jiro clicked the button for the top floor and they waited for the lift to reach its destination.

Iida was the one who said it, "I hope you can tell us what happened one day."

Midoriya pulled at his mask, which seemed to be a nervous tick he'd picked up at some point.

"But not today," Shinso interjected.

"No, of course not," Iida affirmed at the doors opened.

Uraraka was there when they reached the top, panting heavily, "I made it…" she announced, punching the air weakly.

Midoriya laughed, forgetting the severity of everything for a moment.

"Why didn't you just take the elevator?" Jiro questioned, smiling with disbelief at her.

"Quirk… practise," she admitted, the suitcase succumbing to the force of gravity once more as it fell to the ground beside her.

“There’s no way you planned on that being Quirk practise when you started running up the stairs,” Shinso grinned, taking the suitcase off her and starting to walk the rest of the way down the corridor to the room next to his own. He’d always had the slightest hope that it would end up being Midoriya’s room at some point.

“Oh, you’re here,” said Todoroki as he opened his own door. “I thought you weren’t coming for another half an hour.”

[*I was going to wait until my dad’s plane left, but then Mr Aizawa insisted that we went early because people started staring…*] Midoriya trailed off sheepishly as Shinso translated.

“Understandable,” Todoroki nodded, “You’re big news.”

Midoriya scoffed and nodded, pulling at that mask again. Maybe it was uncomfortable?

“Anyway, before we go inside…” said Jiro, sliding in between the door and Midoriya before he could reach the doorknob. “We should probably explain…”

“Oh yeah!” Uraraka interjected. “You see, before you messaged us the day after you came back, we honestly thought it had been some kind of collective fever dream… But then you said *hi* and we all *freaked out* again! And, um, well – you said you’d be coming back in a couple of days so *we* thought we’d…”

Before she could finish, Jiro opened the door, backing into the room, “Ta-da!”

Shinso grinned at Midoriya’s shocked expression.

Mr Aizawa had been *rather* irritated that the five of them spent so long trying to frantically arrange Midoriya’s new room for him, rather than focusing on homework or practise for the provisional licencing exam, which was nerve-rackingly near.

They had painted the walls a deep green (what other colour would it possibly be?) and put up a set of Jiro’s old fairy lights around the window. Iida had spent far too long making sure the shelves were perfectly level, whilst Shinso and Todoroki focused a little more on the various pictures they’d printed out and pinned to a corkboard, similar to Shinso’s, on the wall above Midoriya’s bed, as well as Siren’s new set up, which Shinso was perfectly happy to move out of his own room.

Midoriya actually *bounced* in excitement. He rolled his suitcase over to an empty corner and gazed around with tearful eyes. Eventually, he bowed and signed a [*Thank you*] to them.

“Don’t worry about it!” Uraraka exclaimed.

“We’re just happy to have you here,” Todoroki added as he stiffly accepted a hug from Midoriya.

“Yeah – and you have *way* more instruments than I anticipated you having…” Jiro acknowledged, eying the burnt mess of Midoriya’s guitar.

“Nowhere *near* as many as you have!” Uraraka pointed out, which was *very* true.

Midoriya seemed rather intrigued by that concept, but Jiro was quick to change the subject, rather red faced, “You know what? W-Why don’t we go and get some lunch?!”

“Yes!” Uraraka cried, and stated chanting *food, food, food* – as she ran out of the door and back down the stairs.

Iida charged after her, yelling about running in the halls being poor behaviour, whether being in the main UA building or in the dorms.

But as Shinso followed Todoroki and Jiro out of Midoriya’s room, he noticed him lagging behind.

“Aren’t you coming?” Shinso frowned.

“I, um…” Midoriya mumbled. He reached up to the mask that covered the lower half of his face. [*I can’t eat properly – I’d rather stay here.*]

“But you have to eat,” Shinso insisted.

“Wait, what’s going on?” Jiro frowned.

Great, now Shinso was back to being a *translator*.

He sighed, “Midoriya… has struggles eating now.”

“*Oh…”* Jiro said with pursed lips, “Right, I didn’t think of that…”

Midoriya kicked at the ground as Siren chirped in his ear encouragingly.

“You could come down to the lunch hall and then bring your food back here,” Todoroki suggested. “You can’t avoid it forever.”

Midoriya hesitated, but eventually nodded in understanding, forcing himself to march ahead of them and down the stairs after Uraraka. The others wavered, listening to his footsteps hurry down the staircase without them.

“I’m worried about him,” voiced Jiro after a moment. “Maybe he should have gone home for a while, rather than coming straight here from the hospital?”

“They’re worried about the villains going after him again,” Todoroki explained. “He needs to be somewhere under constant surveillance, that being here or back at the hospital. And here is probably safer.”

“What about that girl, Eri?” Jiro frowned. “Where is she?”

“With Mr Aizawa,” Shinso replied. He’d seen them together in the staff room, when he went to hand in his history homework earlier that day. “Because they know her Quirk is dangerous – they need someone who can stop it if something goes wrong.” He shoved his hands in his pockets and began to wander down after Midoriya.

“Do the heroes know what her Quirk *is?”* questioned Todoroki, wavering at the top of the stairs.

Shinso shrugged, not looking back as the other two hurried down the stairs to walk beside him, “I’m in the same boat as you. The person who knows the most is probably Midoriya. But I think it might be a while before he’s comfortable enough to tell us about it. Remember, he was with the villains only three days ago…”

They walked in silence for a while longer. Midoriya must have ran to catch up with the other two, because he was gone by the time they reached the bottom of the stairs.

“It’s all happening way too fast,” Todoroki nodded. “It’s like he’s trying to forget the past and move on… but that takes time. Scars take time to heal – physically and mentally.”

Shinso’s eyes flickered towards the blemish on his friend’s face. That was another story he hoped to learn one day. He just needed *patience*.

“You must be patient with Midoriya,” Shinso sighed. He was telling himself this fact. He’d done so far too many times. “Things… will get

better with time."

Todoroki just nodded again. "Exactly."

They had to.

"Canary?"

It was a soft and timid voice. Jiro didn't really recognise it at first. She turned around as Midoriya did the same and there was *Kodai.*

"Canary!" exclaimed Komori. The short girl threw herself at Canary, hugging him tightly, "We heard that you were back but I-I was scared to believe it and *oh my gosh* I'm so glad you're *here!"*

Canary signed something, smiling meekly. Wow, Jiro *really* needed to learn some more sign language…

Komori and Kodai just stared at him for a moment.

Shinso sighed, tired eyes flickering back at them when he realised there was a problem with conversing again, "He says it's good to see you two again."

Canary rubbed his head meekly, clearly rather apologetic that Shinso had to speak for him all the time.

"Oh!" Komori exclaimed, "A-And you too! Are you sick? Is that what the mask is for? O-Or I heard there was something wrong with your voice? W-Was that just a r-rumour? Are you ok?"

Now it was Canary's turn to stare. That was a lot of questions.

"Girls don't harass him," said Kendo, sliding into view. "Sorry, Canary – and nice to see you're ok."

Canary nodded. They were starting to gather quite a crowd. Ah, maybe *this* was one of the reasons he wasn't very keen to go to the

lunch hall today…

“Well, well, well – if it isn’t *Canary?* Back from the dead I see!” oh no, not *Monoma.*

Canary visibly tensed and Jiro recalled what Shinso and Todoroki had been muttering about on their way over here. Canary didn’t need to be reminded of all of this right now, especially when he had just arrived to be kept *safe*.

“I heard you can’t use your Quirk anymore!” Monoma said *way too loudly*, “But that doesn’t mean you won’t be welcome in class B instead of –”

But he didn’t have the chance to finish that sentence, because Kendo had already smacked him around the head with a super-powered hand and a grimacing expression. “Sorry about that,” she sighed. “He hasn’t had the chance to berate class A much recently, with all the working up to our provisional licencing exams…”

Canary blinked. He turned on his heel and signed something frantically to Shinso.

“Err, yeah – I guess. I don’t see why you wouldn’t be allowed…”

“What’s this?” Jiro questioned as they reached the front of the queue.

“Watching the exam,” Shinso said simply. “Do you just want the same as me, Midoriya? Oh, yeah, right. Well, then I’ll just have the same as you. No? Why would I mind?”

Jiro sighed. She *really* hated not being able to understand Canary…

They collected their lunches and, just as Uraraka and Iida began swerving towards an empty table, Canary nudged Jiro in her back with his tray.

She turned and blinked at him, as he tilted his head towards the exit.

“Oh, right – you wanted to eat over in the dorms, don’t you?” Jiro remembered.

“Ah, yeah,” Shinso said. “Right, we’ll meet you guys for afternoon registration then.”

“No, wait – we’ll come too!” Uraraka insisted, turning around so quickly that her food almost slid off her tray.

Canary tensed and took a couple of steps back. Maybe he felt uncomfortable with them seeing him eat?

The only one who had seen Canary's injury was Shinso – and he refused to explain. Bakugo had seen it *happen*, but it all went so fast that he apparently didn't know what damage had really been done. But the look on Shinso's face when he returned from Recovery Girl's office, the evening Canary reappeared… It was more than enough to describe the terrible thing that had happened to his closest friend.

"If you don't want us to, then we'll see you at registration, as Shinso said!" insisted Iida, who reached the same train of thought as Jiro had. He plonked his tray down decisively on the closest free table, showing that he would be staying here – supporting Canary from a distance.

Jiro really didn't want to. She wanted to be *with* Canary. She had just really started to come to terms with the fact that her friend was *dead*. Now, he was *back!* But... maybe that was only *physically?* She didn't think allowing him to distance himself like this would help *anyone*...

"Y-Yeah," Uraraka nodded, sitting down beside Iida as Todoroki did the same. "Of course, we understand… See you then!"

But Jiro just stood there as Canary and Shinso walked away. It was only when they were out of sight, that she finally sat down.

"Are you ok, Jiro?" Uraraka frowned. She hadn't touched her food yet.

Jiro just stared at hers, and after a while, she croaked out, "…No."

She buried her face in her hands as Todoroki uncertainly patted her on the shoulder. She was trying to suppress the lump in her throat and wasn't doing a very good job at it.

Pulling her hands away and very carefully drawing the tears from the corners of her eyes so it wouldn't smug her eyeliner, Jiro sniffed loudly. "I-I don't know why I-I so… so…" she trailed off, examining the slight black mark on the end of her finger. Maybe she shouldn't have actually made an effort in her makeup today… "Shouldn't I be really h-happy? Canary's *back* and he's *alive* but I…"

"He was never rescued," Todoroki interjected.

Jiro turned to him slowly, and with a heavy heart, she realised he was right.

No, this canary was still in a cage…

But how could she set him free?

Shinso had sat down, digging into his food before it got any colder than it already was.

Midoriya just sat there and watched for a second.

Shinso realised after a few minutes. He cocked his head to one side, and then tapping his chopsticks on the side of his bowl in what felt like an age-old tradition, “Aren’t you going to eat?”

Midoriya looked down to his rice. He wasn’t sure if it was a brilliant choice, but they didn’t have any soups available, and the doctors had said he shouldn’t be just eating soups for the rest of his life…

He raised his hands to sign something to Shinso – he wasn’t sure what he was going to say, but Shinso interrupted him anyway.

“You need to eat,” he insisted. “I’m not going to stare – but either way, you can’t just starve yourself because you’re scared that it… looks bad.”

Midoriya gulped, and then before he could think about it any further, reached up and pulled off his mask. Into his blazar pocket, he’d shoved a specially designed, rubbery item that fitted well to the hole in his cheek. It was grey and was kept in something like a gum-shield case. Midoriya had practiced eating with it in only a few times before, but he was so keen to get out of the hospital, that he hadn’t had more time. It was because of UA’s influence that he was able to get something like this so easily and quickly, since the waiting time for an operation would be longer than expected. Well, if it was just to patch up the hole, it might have been sooner, but they also had to do this… *phantom tongue* thing – and Midoriya would rather it was all done at once, rather than have to go into the operating theatre several times in a row.

Shinso held true to his word and refused to look at Midoriya as he

slotted the thing into place clumsily, and then he dug into his food.

The problem was less the lack of part of his cheek, and more of his tongue. Not only could Midoriya taste *nothing* until he swallowed, but it was also really hard to move the food around in his mouth, just like the doctor had said. So, he was forced to use his finger to move the rice around from time to time, and consequently, he ate very slowly.

“Shinso? What are you doing here?”

Midoriya panicked, dropping his chopsticks onto the floor as he scrambled to cover his mouth with his surgical mask. He thrust it over his jaw with such force that he ended up popping the… well, the prosthetic, he supposed – into his mouth. In surprise, he choked, and the thing fell right of his mouth and into his half-empty bowl.

“Canary?”

Midoriya had his mask back over his face again now, without the straps holding it in place. He turned around, only to see one of the members of class A that he really didn’t know so well yet.

“Are you ok?” Shoji frowned, putting an empty tray on the table beside him as his eyes flickered between the piece of grey plastic that he’d just choked on and the mask Midoriya kept firmly over his face.

Shinso let out a small laugh, “He just didn’t expect to see you there, I think.”

“Oh, sorry – it’s understandable that you’re a little jumpy. I didn’t mean to creep up on you like that,” he apologised, picking up Midoriya’s hastily discarded chopsticks.

Midoriya just smiled meekly beneath his mask and used his free hand to wave the matter off.

Shoji blinked at him for a moment, before saying, “Why are you two eating over here? I thought I was the only one who did that?”

“Um, Midoriya was just a little worried about being in the lunch hall right after he arrived,” Shinso explained hesitantly.

“With everyone crowding you?” Shoji rolled his eyes, “Understandable – but…” he glanced at his mask. “I… I heard Shigaraki did something to your mouth? Is that one of the reasons why you’re here?”

Midoriya let the tension out of his shoulders, slumping in his seat in defeat.

Shoji hesitated, but then he reached up, and to Midoriya's surprise, pulled off the mask that covered his *own* mouth.

Midoriya's eyes widened. Underneath, he could see jagged teeth and a rather frightening smile; his lips stretching across both cheeks, almost all the way across his jaw.

With what could only be described as a smile, Shoji held out his mask to Midoriya. "I've got a couple of others, but they're in the wash," he explained. "I swear I only just put this on."

Midoriya was tearing up as he let his bulky, uncomfortable surgical mask drop from his face. Shoji's expression didn't morph into one of unadulterated *horror* when he saw the damage, but remained unchanging, as Midoriya gratefully pulled the blue-grey fabric over his head. It was a little big, but the material seemed to be slightly elasticated, and despite bundling up a little around his neck, it managed to fit his face quite well.

"Just get some scissors and cut the bottom of it off," Shoji suggested. "You might actually be able to split it in half – get two masks out of it, if you don't mind it not reaching all the way down your neck."

With shaking hands, all Midoriya could do was sign an enthusiastic [*Thank you!*] to Shoji.

His smile grew a little wider. It really wasn't scary at all when he wasn't *worried* it would be…

"Do you want me to take your empty trays back to the lunch hall?" Shoji offered, "I just need to pick up one of my masks from the wash."

And that's exactly what he did.

Meanwhile, Midoriya was sitting there, freaking out, over the fact that Shoji *wasn't* freaking out and Shinso was more enamoured by the fact that he had someone else to had to his creepily inspiring smiles list.

It was getting rather long.

Jiro was more than a little surprised when Canary slipped into class 1-A, not long later, wearing what looked like a modified version of Shoji's mask. He looked a lot happier in it than he had been in that stiff surgical mask, but Jiro soon realised that the main thing he was excited about was the fact that, after far too many months, here he was, in class 1-A – where he belonged.

As soon as he stepped into the classroom for the first time, he was immediately *swarmed* by the rest of his new classmates.

"Canary!" Mina exclaimed, leaping at him and hugging him tightly despite how unsure he seemed about her sudden movements. "Ah! It's *so* good to see you again!"

"Is it true Shigaraki disintegrated half your *jaw?"* gaped Kaminari, who was one for taking rumours a little too far – it couldn't have been *that* bad, surely…

"What happened to Eri? Is she still with Mr Aizawa, ribbit?" frowned Tsuyu.

"Everyone! Please don't crowd Midoriya!" Iida, ever diligent, exclaimed. "Get to your seats; registration is about to begin!"

Shinso practically dragged Canary across the room, plonking him down in the previously unoccupied seat in front of him; behind Bakugo… Jiro hoped that wouldn't prove to be a problem. But at least she was relatively close to him – being diagonally behind her to her left.

Mr Aizawa appeared, perfectly on time, as always – looking as exhausted as ever. Eri wasn't there… perhaps she was with another member of staff? "Right," he sighed. "Let's get this over with, shall we? Yuuga Aoyama?"

"Présent!"

Jiro did her usual and blanked out right up until her own name was called. She was a little busy focusing on the fact that Siren had decided to tap at the window *constantly* until Midoriya scurried over to let her in.

"Katsuki Bakugo?"

"Here."

"…Izuku Midoriya?"

"Mhm!" was the sound Canary made. Jiro was glad he was acting a little more like himself now, happy and enthusiastic, rather than the gloomy mood he seemed to be in around lunch time. Jiro wondered how long this would last. Something still felt… *off* about him – like he was forcing himself to accept it all and move on.

"Hitoshi Shinso?"

"Yes, Sir," Shinso replied with a grin, relaxing into his chair as he too, seemed to realise that the classroom felt so much more *complete* with every chair filled, and that Canary filled one of them.

"And Momo Yaoyorozu?"

"Present, Mr Aizawa."

"Good," their teacher sighed. "Right – you have English and then maths next. If you have any other *drastic happenings* at the dorms later this evening," he gave Canary a look, "you know where to find me."

He slung his obnoxiously yellow sleeping bag over his shoulder, and waltzed towards the door, halting just before it and waiting for –

"HHHEEELLLOOO, LITTLE LISTENERS!" Present Mic yelled at the top of his voice, slamming the door open as he did so.

"Try not to burst any eardrums again," Mr Aizawa sighed as he slipped out of the room and disappeared into the corridor.

"WHEN HAVE I EVER DONE THAT?!" Present Mic called back with a worryingly sarcastic tone. He turned back around to the class. "ANYWAYS –" he hesitated, smiled even *wider* and pointed at Canary dramatically. "MY FAVOURITE STUDENT IS HERE AND HE IS FLUENT IN ENGLISH! But I'm guessing you want the homework anyways?"

Canary just nodded, like a madman.

"Well then… Let's get right down to it!" Present Mic exclaimed enthusiastically, flinging himself into the teacher's chair and letting it slide across the room a little bit.

And so, a completely ordinary English lesson commenced, the only difference being that Canary was able to send hints on grammar across

the classroom by using Siren as some kind of carrier pigeon. This was promptly followed by a *completely ordinary* maths lesson, in which Canary ploughed through maths equations at a similar rate to Yaoyorozu and Iida.

Yet… no, it still felt *wrong* to Jiro. What would happen when hero lessons came around? Canary *deserved* to be in them, yet she'd already been informed that he *wouldn't* be… then, in only a week's time, the provisional licensing exam would be upon them, and Canary could only watch – it wasn't right!

But then… what could their next move possibly be?

How could she rescue him*, properly?*

I hear the whisper underneath your breath –
I hear you whisper you have nothing left…

I will send out an army to find you. In the middle of the darkest night it's true, I will rescue you…

Chapter End Notes

Art! Fasten your seatbelts because this edition really is epic!

Pigeonat drew us Midoriya and Eri when they came back!

Then **Tiramisu** did an incredible drawing of Canary – with his wings and his injury and it's just *awesome!*

Speaking of awesome, we've got a lot of incredible art this time, the next edition of such is Seris, who has drawn us a pretty little Siren, but that's not the only one they've done (and definitely a trigger warning for this but it's *awesome*), with this one depicting Canary's injury!

And then, this must have taken *ages* but it was worth the wait

because it looks *so cool* – titled the Sound of Silence by dabmight!

Next, LeahZEEEEE (archive name **Leah1705**) is back with a pretty little doodle of Bluebird!

And **Thelovypop17** has drawn (maybe trigger warning?) a rather sad couple of canaries :(

You think it's over? *Nope* – because **Melchryn**'s back with a *beautiful* drawing of Midoriya singing!

Then ducky did sweet little sketches of Siren (and Present Mic and Midoriya, but the Sirens are adorable)

And AmyStarSmith has gifted us a wonderful comic of Shinso's reaction to Midoriya's reappearance!

Finally, last but by no means the least – it's 101 (finally with an archive name - **FiveInBinaryOr101**) with the return of Midoriya and Eri!

Remember that all the users written in **bold** are archive users! So, go over and check them out; they're all amazing! If it's not in bold, then they've come from Discord, and they either don't have an account or I just don't know it XD. The link for Discord is titled *the link to the chaos* which is in the end-endnotes – so come on over and say hi!

So, just a little tid bit of information that will become more relevant as we go along. You probably know that people in Japan are more frequently referred to by their last names, and first names when people know them better. In this story I use surnames almost exclusively, for literally no reason I just keep forgetting the first names of a bunch of the characters and just stuck with the surnames. In the coming chapters, whether Midoriya should be called… Midoriya, or canary, will be considered a little more. Is canary his name independent of his quirk, or was canary someone he became once he realised his power? Jiro will confuse this the most - and this doesn't particularly offend Midoriya, I can't say he'll particularly notice it. But in conclusion, Canary is the person Midoriya became when he realised his true self, and his quirk is independent of that

Heroes in Their Own Way

Chapter Notes

So, I did that thing again.

You know? Where I write a chapter, get to the end and then realise it's like, thirteen thousand words long and I have to split it in half? Yeah… *that.*

I GUESS THE CHAPTER COUNT'S GONE UP AGAIN THEN.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Five days since the return

Kirishima yawned loudly, blundering down the stairs in the dead of night. He didn't know *why* he couldn't sleep. It was unlike him.

His aching muscles protested, after being pushed to their limits during the training for their up-and-coming provisional licencing exam. It was only a couple of days away now, and Kirishima was weirdly looking forward to it.

But there was a strange feeling in the pit of his stomach. He'd woken up like that. Was it… a nightmare? He couldn't remember what it was about but… something scared him. He couldn't just lie there in his room anymore, staring at the ceiling. Sleep just didn't seem to be working anymore.

He had decided to head downstairs to the common room area. Shinso and Todoroki had been muttering about an incidence in the middle of the night once, where the two of them went down to the kitchen at the same time and walked right into each other. Perhaps Kirishima wouldn't be the only one awake. That would be a nice distraction.

Blowing a strand of red hair out of his eyes, Kirishima trotted down

the last few steps, not bothering to be quiet as he stumbled clumsily into the common area. He couldn't *see* anyone around, although, it was pretty dark.

Stopping in his tracks, he sighed. Maybe he should get a drink of water or something…

So, he swerved over towards the kitchen, running his hand along the wall until it hit the light switch.

Blinking in the light – his eyes soon zeroed in on none other than… *Canary*.

"Canary?" he whispered. The green haired boy had his head down on the kitchen counter. Was he asleep?

No, after Kirishima said his name once again, he stirred, blinking furiously as he looked up at him.

"What are you doing down here?" frowned Kirishima, sitting down on the empty chair on the other side of the counter to him.

Canary just sniffed loudly, rubbing at his eyes as he sat a little more upright, shrugging his shoulders.

He had his mask on, the one that Shoji had supposedly given him. But there were damp patches over it. Kirishima couldn't tell if it was from his mouth being slightly open underneath the fabric, or if they were from the tears that still glistened in the bags under his eyes.

"Hey, man," Kirishima said softly, shuffling a little further forward in his chair, "You alright?"

He just shrugged again, shifting his position to reveal his phone, that he had supposedly fallen asleep on top of.

"You don't look alright," Kirishima continued. He hesitated, taking in the state of his classmate. "Did you… have a nightmare?"

Canary flinched; Kirishima took that as a yes.

"I did too…"

Canary looked up at him again, rubbing the tears from his face as he waited expectantly for Kirishima to keep on talking.

"I – err – I really can't remember what it was about. I just sort of…

woke up feeling kind of *scared*, I guess. And I thought I'd come down here for a bit," he admitted, with a shrug not dissimilar to Canary's. "But like… dreams are generally about what you're thinking about before you go to sleep, right? So, maybe it was something to do with Kamino…"

Kirishima looked to Canary unsurely when he said that. He didn't want to upset him further, but he didn't seem too bothered.

"Um… I'm sorry… I was there with the others – we came to get you and Bakugo back. But we only managed to get *him* out. I can't help but feel a little guilty we didn't manage to save you too."

Canary shook his head vigorously, a stern look upon his face. Kirishima could easily tell what he meant.

"I know, I know. We weren't technically supposed to be there anyway and at least we got Bakugo. But… we all seriously thought you were *dead*, man! You have no idea how relieved we were when you came back, out of the blue… and with that little girl too – Eri?"

He nodded. Kirishima obviously couldn't see under his mask, but it was still clear that he was smiling, just a little.

"Like, come on, man! Bust out of wherever the League was keeping you *and* rescue a little girl in the process? All whilst you couldn't speak, was badly hurt *and* didn't have a Quirk? I don't think I could have done that; it's seriously manly."

He was smiling a little brighter now, if not with a hint of sadness, as he rubbed his head sheepishly.

"Do you want like, something to eat?" Kirishima suggested, getting up from his chair. "Kaminari says there's a secret stash of cookies hidden somewhere around here…"

But Canary just shook his head, pointing to his mask.

"Ah, right… You find it hard to eat sometimes, don't you? I forgot about that."

He just shrugged again, pocketing his phone. He indicated towards the cupboards and then back to Kirishima, who took his best guess at what Canary might have meant.

"No, it's alright – I'm not exactly hungry. I might have some water

though. Would you –”

But he shook his head again.

“Is drinking hard too? Sorry, man, I didn’t realise.”

However, Kirishima poured two cups of water regardless, sitting back down at the counter again. “Just in case you’d want it later,” Kirishima explained as Canary looked at him and the cup weirdly.

He just sighed and nodded.

“Oh yeah, that reminds me – how’s speech therapy going?”

Midoriya lifted his hand and tilted it from side to side.

“It’s alright?” he presumed, and Canary nodded. “Do you think you’ve had much progress?”

He just shrugged again, picking up the water and swilling it around, watching the liquid splash up around the sides of the glass.

“You will eventually,” Kirishima insisted, taking a sip of his own water. “It’ll just take practise, I guess. You never know, maybe you’ll be able to speak enough to let you sing, one day!”

Canary gave him another meek smile, as if he was appreciating Kirishima’s optimism, but not truly believing in it.

“It must be tricky though – getting used to speaking like this after being *selectively* mute for so long.”

He nodded, still watching the water swirling.

“What else do you do whilst we’re all in our hero training classes?” continued Kirishima. “Do you hang out with Eri sometimes? Or your friends from class 1-C?”

Canary held up one finger. What would he mean by that? One… 1-C? Or first – the first thing he said – oh! “You hang out with Eri?”

He nodded – success!

“How is she?”

He pulled a bit of a face and just continued to nod.

“Well, I’m sure that she’s happier when you’re around anyway,” Kirishima concluded. “She has a dangerous Quirk, right? That’s why the villains had her?”

He frowned and gave yet another nod – perhaps he *thinks* that was the case but wasn’t one hundred percent sure…

“Hm… I hope the police and the heroes will figure it out at some point.”

Another nod.

“Well, if you’re bored of speech therapy and can’t hang out with Eri for some reason, I’m sure Mr Aizawa would be more than happy to let you come and watch our hero training!” Kirishima grinned brightly, standing up to go and quickly wash up his cup. Iida would be *furious* if he left it lying around to be sorted in the morning. Better just fix it now.

But from the corner of his eye, he could see Canary tilt his head strangely. Pulling back his mask with one hand, he picked up his cup with his other and took a sip of water, putting it down again and hiding his face before Kirishima could walk back and see what he hid underneath it.

“Hey, it’s ok, man,” Kirishima said quickly sitting back down in his chair. “You don’t have to feel self-conscious about your injury.”

Canary just let out a weird, uncertain noise as he pulled his phone from his pocket, typed something out and handed it over to Kirishima.

Shinso was scared of it.

Kirishima shook his head, handing the phone back, “No he wasn’t, man. He was scared for *you.* We all were, well, are.

Canary hesitated, and then, to Kirishima’s surprise, he pulled down his pale blue mask, and turned his head.

There was a gaping hole in his face.

Kirishima’s eyes widened, his heart beating fast. He tried not to look too shocked, but it was a little difficult, “Wow… I’m sorry – that must have hurt…”

He sighed. Picking up his water again, Kirishima could see why he

had to tilt his head like that. He didn't want the liquid to drip out of his *missing cheek*.

"You're getting that fixed, right?" Kirishima questioned.

Midoriya nodded, brushing any escapee water from his chin. He held up nine fingers after putting his glass down.

"In nine days?"

Another nod.

"Ah, ok – that must be a relief."

With an agreeing gesture, he grinned. The way his face *curled* around the injury was truly shocking. The smile itself gave off a terrifying look that the rest of his face simply did not convey.

Kirishima tore his eyes away from it and ended up resting them on the clock attached to the wall above the sink. "Ah, man! It's *two in the morning!* We should probably get back to bed."

Canary nodded unsurely, pulling his mask back over his face and quickly hurrying over to wash up his glass.

They started to walk up the stairs together. Kirishima was on a different floor to Canary though, so he knew they have to soon part ways.

"Will you watch hero training tomorrow then?" Kirishima asked as they walked.

Canary hesitated, and then shook his head.

"Busy? Yeah – I thought so. What about the day after? It's the last one before the provisional licencing exam. Maybe you could give us some advice!"

He didn't waver to nod this time, just as Kirishima reached his floor.

"Well, see you in the morning then – try not to think about… whatever was giving you nightmares," Kirishima suggested. "Think about… Siren – doing… literally *anything* Siren does."

Canary let out a small laugh and nodded, before waving goodbye and disappearing off up the stairs.

Kirishima, however, did not follow his own advice.

For the rest of the night, he couldn't stop thinking about *Canary* – about what happened to him. About what would happen *next*.

He drifted off into an uneasy sleep.

Six days since the return

All Might's students were off to their provisional licencing exam tomorrow! Well, could he call himself *All Might* anymore? Yagi was retired – the Symbol of Peace was gone. But then again, just as his old teacher, Gran Torino, had told him – despite all this, the *person* that used to be All Might and all he represented, was still around.

But as a strange parallel, so was Canary.

All Might cast his case over to young Midoriya, who stood, rested against the far wall, watching his classmates put their all into their training. He should have been one of them, instead, an injury by a terrible villain had taken it all from him.

Yagi instinctively reached towards his side, deep in thought.

He had considered giving his Quirk to young Midoriya. The thought of him was lingering there even when he was introduced to young Mirio. He saw parallels of himself in the younger boy, but he found his own path towards his dreams. He didn't need One for All. And as All Might watched him in the Sports Festival, he realised something. One for All wasn't a necessity for a hero to become to the Symbol of Peace. Because whilst Mirio would do great things, that he was sure of – perhaps it would instead be *Canary* who reaches the top.

All Might was an untouchable pillar. Someone that everyone looked up to, but only because they didn't know what he had to do to get there. They knew All Might, not Toshinori Yagi.

But for Canary? They looked up to the young boy *because* they *knew* him. They saw someone who was well and truly at the bottom, and watched him climb to the top, proving that anyone could do the same,

if they tried. He was relatable, and people could understand him. He would have made a brilliant hero.

However, that was a future beyond their realm of possibility now.

“Young Midoriya?” All Might called out.

The boy turned to him quickly, as if startled, and then just blinked at All Might, waiting for him to say something more.

“Ah, h-how are you feeling, my boy?” he started, unsure of what else to say. It was rather difficult having a conversation with someone who couldn’t speak back, and Yagi still didn’t know sign language. He could finger spell in ASL… kind of – at least he knew the vowels!

Midoriya hesitated for a moment, before giving All Might a nervous shrug and leaning against the wall again, casting his gaze back to his friend Shinso, who was mercilessly practising his techniques with Aizawa’s spare scarf. It seemed that Yagi wasn’t the only one who had taken a young student under their wing.

All Might cleared his throat, leaning against the wall beside Midoriya. The boy ducked his head a little and tilted it away from him. Yagi frowned; it was rather… odd behaviour.

“…It’s been a while since we last spoke,” Yagi said eventually.

He had expected Midoriya to nod or at least make a sound in reply, but he didn’t – not even an attempt at a conversation… There *had* to be a way to fix this. What hero wouldn’t even attempt to try? Retired or not, he could make a difference, *surely*.

First things first, he might as well get this out of the way… “I’m sorry about what happened to you.”

Midoriya visibly tensed more than he had been already.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t there when you needed me, or any hero for that matter –”

But All Might was cut off when the young boy pulled his phone from his pocket and started to type something furiously into it.

Ah, perfect! There was a way for them to communicate after all!

Yagi had been expecting to *read* the messages that Canary wrote. Instead, the device played them aloud – the robotic tone not at all

fitting whatever emotion should have been behind the words.

"You were there when I needed you. You came in Kamino and rescued Kac-chan," Midoriya frowned at that pronunciation, rolling his eyes as the message continued. *"You couldn't do any more than that. Your injury was bound to catch up on you eventually."*

All Might waited a moment to be sure the message was over. "Ah yes, that is true. Sometimes I forget that you were one of the few who knew of that before all… *this."*

But then young Midoriya lifted up his phone again. There was an oddly stern look in his eyes when he clicked play once more.

"However, what you do not seem to understand is that the time when I needed you most has long passed."

The boy pressed pause. His body was relaxing now; a strange confidence radiating around him.

All Might frowned, "Well then… when did you need me?"

It was as though Midoriya had been expecting Yagi to say that, because when he pressed play again, the robotic voice said, "*I needed you on that day, when we met well over a year ago now. We were on a rooftop. You said a Quirkless boy like me could never be a hero. I needed you to say anything but that."*

The message seemed to end there. Yagi stared – he could barely remember saying something like that to him. But, surely, he was just trying to help – if he tried at heroics without a Quirk, the attempt would have been futile. All Might knew that first-hand.

Midoriya sighed. Perhaps he had wanted Yagi to say something else, but no words came to his mind at that moment. Instead, he tapped away at his phone again, and moments later, this was the reply he heard –

"I was told to commit suicide that day."

All Might's eyes widened, "Young Midoriya, *who –"*

"And you left me alone on a rooftop, after crushing my dreams."

Yagi reached out to him – he hadn't *realised* –

But Midoriya took a step away as the message continued to run, glancing towards Kirishima, would had just waved and called his name, "*Mr number one hero, you must know the power of words. I do.*

"And I can't speak.

"But that's your fault."

Seven days since the return

"Um… Kyoka?"

Jiro blinked, wait, who said…?

She paused her music and turned in her seat. Canary… Midoriya… was there, his hand hovering a few inches from her shoulder.

"What did you just –" she started.

"You've missed out on an entire *conversation,"* Uraraka said with a grin, raising her eyebrows.

"A… conversation?" Jiro frowned, turning off her phone and dragging herself from the daydream she had fallen into, staring out of the bus window.

They were on their way to the provisional licence examinations now. Jiro's hero costume was enclosed in the case by her feet. She had been trying to distract herself from the anxiety by letting herself drift away into the world the music painted. But consequently, had paid little

attention to her own reality.

Midoriya blushed, sinking back into his seat beside Shinso. The two of them were behind Jiro and Yaoyorozu, whilst Uraraka sat with Iida opposite, and Todoroki, in front of them, who had been listening to *Canary's Arsenal* (the playlist that the group of friends shared constantly between them. Midoriya still didn't know they had access to it) at the beginning of the journey, but now had pulled out his earplugs to engage in this *conversation*, was sitting beside Koda.

"We're trying to figure out names," Shinso explained. "It's harder than you might think."

Midoriya scoffed and signed something quickly to Shinso, who just grinned and gave Koda a look, due to him being the only other person on the bus who could decipher their language. Koda just kind of looked a little shocked…

"What's wrong with our *names?"* Jiro said slowly, furrowing her brow.

"Some sounds are too difficult for Midoriya now," sighed Shinso. "Names are the first hurdle."

"He can say Uraraka!" the girl in question exclaimed happily, "*Kind* of – *K* sounds are a *little* iffy but we're getting better!"

Midoriya nodded sheepishly. Jiro wasn't too sure how much he was enjoying this attention.

Everyone had been rather… *clingy* to Midoriya over the past week. Jiro had backed off a little once she noticed how uncomfortable he seemed to be feeling. But she couldn't help herself sometimes – none of them could. He isolated himself far more than he used to. He rarely spoke through sign language at all anymore. Perhaps he felt sorry for Shinso having to translate all the time… But anyway, this was the first time Jiro had heard Midoriya attempt speaking since he first came back! No one but Shinso (and maybe Shoji? Since Midoriya *was* wearing his mask…) really knew what was wrong with Midoriya's voice, but it seemed to be a serious impediment.

"No *J* or *L* sounds either," Iida added. "And every time we attempt the letter *N* it just comes out as *M*."

The colour of Midoriya's cheeks clashed dramatically with his hair as he sunk back into his chair. He signed something slowly to Shinso, who didn't translate, and just smiled and shook his head instead.

He must have been saying that this whole situation was rather embarrassing – that was the only thing that made sense to Jiro. Midoriya pulled the collar of his leather jacket up around his face in an obvious attempt to hide his flushing complexion.

– Yes, *that* leather jacket. Jiro was a little surprised when she saw it again. She thought it was trapped within his disused hero costume case, but apparently it had been retrieved for sentimental purposes.

"So, no *Owl* and no *Jiro*," Shinso nodded, bringing Jiro out of her slight daydream once again. "That left us with your first name."

Jiro blinked, ah – it made sense why Midoriya had called her that earlier than, "Ok sure – what have you come up with for everyone else?"

"Oh, I'm Yaomomo," Yaoyorozu grinned. "The *zu* part of my name was rather tricky, we realised."

"My name is Ravem now," Shinso added in complete monotone. He only cracked a smile when Midoriya punched him lightly in the shoulder – *not* something Jiro thought he'd do.

But before their conversation could progress much further, the bus finally came to a halt.

"Alright, class," Mr Aizawa called from the front of the bus, "We're here – don't forget your hero costumes."

"Ah! I'm so nervous!" Uraraka whined.

"You'll do fine, Ochako," insisted Tsuyu, hopping up behind her.

Jiro herself was swallowing her fear as her class filled slowly out of the bus, each of them buzzing with anticipation as they gathered outside.

There were lots of other hero schools already there. The passing students did a double take as they spied the iconic UA uniform that Jiro and her classmates sported. All except for Midoriya, of course. He wasn't actually taking part in the exam and so was allowed to wear something else. But Jiro had a feeling that Mr Aizawa had only said he could do that because Midoriya had only just rediscovered his Canary jacket again, which had been left with the school, alongside all his other summer camp gear, after he disappeared. Maybe that was something else which caught everyone else's attention.

Mr Aizawa was giving them some kind of motivational talk – or, at least, he was attempting to. Jiro wasn't really listening though; she was paying more attention to the whispers around her. Those in question clearly hadn't realised her hearing was adequate enough to listen in.

"Look at those uniforms!" one said.

"Oh my God, it's *UA*!"

"*Class 1-A*, to be exact! Remember the Sports Festival?"

"How could I *not?* I must have watched the final a million times on repeat!"

"Speaking of which…"

"What?"

"Isn't that… *Canary?"*

"Wow! It *is!* He really *is* alive!"

"He's not wearing a uniform though…"

"Oh yeah, he lost his voice, right?"

"Come on guys, it's time for our cheer!" Kirishima exclaimed enthusiastically.

'Wait, cheer?' Jiro frowned, '*Oh, wait – that…*'

"*Plus…"*

"– ULTRA!"

Everyone in the class turned at once when the unfamiliar voice interjected into their chant.

"It's bad manners to intrude on another group's huddle, Inasa," said yet another stranger.

It was this *Inasa* who yelled his apologies at the top of his voice,

bowing so deep that his head hit the floor, but even the impact didn't make him flinch, despite the spot of blood that it drew from his hairline, visible from just underneath a black hat that him and the rest of his school sported.

A black hat that bared the iconic, golden *s* of one, Shiketsu High.

Jiro saw Shinso nudge Midoriya in his side, "Would you look at that, it's *blackmail* school…"

Midoriya gulped. He didn't quite know why the appearance of Shiketsu felt so unnerving. Maybe because he had once used their name to blackmail his and Shinso's way into UA's hero course…

"I ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY SAYING THAT!" the Inasa guy yelled. "PLUS ULTRA – I FREAKING LOVE UA!"

Siren hopped out of Midoriya's hair, disturbed from her slumber by the loud exclamations. She let out an angry chirp as she settled down on his shoulder again.

"Come *on*, Inasa," groaned his purple haired classmate, already turning to leave. He made eye contact with Midoriya for a split second – before tearing himself away and marching towards the test centre.

Inasa left as quickly as he had arrived. The only other person who lingered was a rather enthralled looking, blonde haired girl, who smiled strangely at Midoriya and gave a little wave, before noticing the red on her classmate's head and hurrying after him, pointing out the damage.

Mr Aizawa and the rest of the class seemed rather focused on Inasa and his deal with UA, but Midoriya wasn't really paying attention. It wasn't like it mattered much to him – despite being entered for the exam all the way back when he was officially transferred to the hero course, with the injury hidden beneath his mask, he was told not to go through with it. Anyway – it wasn't like he could use his Quirk anymore…

"Oh my gosh! *Hi*, Canary! Can I have your autograph?!" beamed a toothy-grinned girl who practically bounced into Midoriya's line of

sight.

He blinked, a little overwhelmed. He'd only just gotten over the *first* encounter from another hero school and here was yet *another*.

Suddenly, someone grabbed his hands and yanked him forwards.

"You're Canary! Oh wow, it's so great to meet you!" exclaimed the dark-haired boy, his personality so bright that it was shocking. Although, perhaps being in such a social atmosphere for the first time in well… *a while*… was what Midoriya was struggling with.

"My name's Shindo!" the boy introduced himself, still holding Midoriya's hands as some kind of greeting, "And, really, *wow* – everything you've been through – and you managed to get away from the villains all by yourself! Even without your Quirk…" he trailed off as his eyes fixed on Midoriya's mask. "Really amazing…"

Midoriya let out a nervous laugh, pulling his hands away and backing up a little. He couldn't wait for this all to be over…

"Be nice guys! Try not to harass them too much!"

Midoriya sighed, thank God for their –

Oh my God their teacher!

Midoriya grabbed Shinso's shoulders, staring at said teacher with a quivering excitement.

It was Ms Joke!

"Why are you bouncing?" Shinso said with clear worry in his voice, struggling to maintain his balance. "Is this another fanboy freak out? Because we haven't done this in a while… Is this a good thing?"

"Canary – a hero fanboy?" Sero grinned nervously from across the group, "For some reason, I didn't expect that…"

"It's great to meet ya, kid!" grinned Ms Joke. "It's not often that people have heard of me, so this is a *super* nice change!"

Midoriya bounded in front of Shinso and quickly signed to him, [*The knock-knock joke – tell her about the knock-knock joke!*]

"What? Why?" Shinso frowned.

"*Wait* – what's this about a knock-knock joke?!" the hero exclaimed.

Midoriya's eyes *sparkled* when he realised that *she knew sign language!*

Shinso's eyes gave a look of *fear* when he too, came to this conclusion, "Nothing," he said way too quickly, grabbing Midoriya's hands to stop him from signing anymore.

"Stop getting so distracted," Mr Aizawa sighed, cutting into the conversation. "Get your costumes and head inside."

Midoriya was about to pull his hands away from Shinso when he harshly whispered to him, "Tell the comedy hero about the knock-knock joke and I'll make sure to tell everyone what song defeated Stain."

Midoriya blinked at him with a glare that clearly said *you wouldn't dare…*

"I can and I will – just watch me."

"Stop threatening Midoriya," Jiro teased. Wait, when did she start calling him just… *Midoriya?* He'd only ever heard her call him by *Canary*.

Shinso didn't notice, and just sighed, letting go of Midoriya and slinging his hero costume case over his shoulder. "See you on the other side," he said, not looking back at him as he hurried off after the rest of class A –

– without him.

"You just watching today then, Canary?!" exclaimed Ms Joke, throwing an arm over his shoulder.

Midoriya stumbled, almost losing his balance as he nodded unsurely.

"Awesome! You can hang out with me!" she leant in to whisper in his ear, "*And that means I can drag Eraser along too* – ANYWAYS! Go off ahead, guys!" she exclaimed, calling back to her own school and waving, "I'll be watching from the stands – do me proud!"

"We will, Miss!" yelled her class back in unison.

As they passed, the girl from earlier swerved over towards Midoriya to

say, “Seriously though, can I have your autograph after this?”

“Quit being such a fangirl, Tatami!” that Shindo guy called back, causing the girl, Tatami, to give Midoriya one last, smile, wave, and charge after them enthusiastically.

“Right then!” said Ms Joke.

She radiated a similar energy to Present Mic; Midoriya wondered how Mr Aizawa always ended up surrounded by this kind of people.

She let go of Midoriya’s shoulder and started to march ahead after Mr Aizawa, who was quickly disappearing into the arena the exam was to be held in. Midoriya blinked at his teacher and quickly began to scamper after him.

“What was this I heard about a knock-knock joke?” Ms Joke pressed as Midoriya caught up with her and Mr Aizawa, being stopped by a security guard at the door, checking their identities for watching the exam.

“Oh!” Midoriya exclaimed. The sound almost made Ms Joke jump. Perhaps she hadn’t expected him to be able to make any noise at all. [*My friend over there. His Quirk allows him to control someone if they reply to a question*] he started to explain, completely ignoring Shinso’s warnings.

“Ah yeah,” Ms Joke nodded. “I watched the Sports Festival – you were *so good* by the way.”

Midoriya blushed furiously and continued to sign, [*I told him at the Sports Festival that he could try and use jokes to make someone laugh to activate his Quirk*]

“And he used a knock-knock joke?” the hero laughed loudly. “That’s *brilliant!”* she was laughing way too hard, buckling over as Mr Aizawa turned slightly to glare at her. “Knock-knock – who’s there? – I don’t know but here’s the *punch* line!” she yelled, swinging her fist as she giggled manically.

And suddenly Midoriya couldn’t help it. He felt the laughter rising up his chest before he knew it. It wasn’t even that funny! He was still sniggering when Mr Aizawa flashed his red eyes at him, cancelling out Ms Joke’s Quirk, even if she had attempted using it.

The hero continued to blurt out the most ridiculous knock-knock jokes

she could think of as they walked up through the inside of the stands and up to the seating area. Midoriya's cheeks hurt from smiling – like *really* hurt. His injury throbbed. He hadn't laughed like that since… well, Midoriya wasn't sure he'd laughed that much at all since he got back. From time to time, perhaps – but this didn't feel as forced, or *sad*.

Mr Aizawa had a sheet of paper in his hands – he passed a copy over to Ms Joke, who was sitting on the other side of Midoriya to him. As he did so, Ms Joke put a hand over her mouth and started to snigger, "Eraser… your fly is down! Ha, ha!"

Mr Aizawa just sighed exasperatingly, not gullible enough to fall for it. Midoriya almost felt sorry for him.

Ms Joke sighed as her laughs didn't seem to infect Mr Aizawa. She looked down at her paper and started to skim through it. Over her shoulder, Midoriya cautiously read along. It seemed to be detailing how this exam would work – split into two parts, this first bit would drastically narrow down the field of competitors from thousands down to only one hundred, through a simple game where the heroes in training would throw rubber balls at three targets attached to their opponents' bodies.

"Weird that you still have twenty students this year, Eraser!" Ms Joke said after finally finishing her paper and passing it over to Midoriya so he could read through it properly. "Do my eyes deceive me or do you actually *like* this class?!"

"Not really."

Ms Joke laughed and Midoriya had the audacity to look *hurt*.

Mr Aizawa gave him a look as he continued, "I've already failed two students. Midoriya and Shinso are both transfers from the general studies course."

"Ah…" said Ms Joke. "Makes sense – still significantly larger than last year's lot though! You're not *embarrassed* are you?!"

He didn't say anything, his eyes now transfixed on the strange box in the corner of the *massive* arena. It's walls and ceiling had just parted to reveal all the hero students waiting inside. They had now started to scatter across the stadium, alone or in several groups.

"You didn't tell them, did you?" Ms Joke suddenly said.

Midoriya blinked at her as she stared down at one particular group, heading towards the middle of the arena – *Midoriya's* class.

"– about the UA crush?"

"I didn't need to."

But before Midoriya could get his head around what that could possibly mean – the exam had begun.

As it turns out, The *UA crush* that Ms Joke had been referring towards, meant that a good majority of the rest of the hero students aimed their focus at Midoriya's friends, because they already knew about their Quirks from the Sports Festival. But they had been grossly unprepared for how much class 1-A had improved.

Although Midoriya couldn't quite see all of it, he was still rather certain that they had a deserving victory, when they finally trudged towards the exit, the targets attached to various places on their costumes glowing green as they went.

Midoriya hurried towards the edge and waved down at them. It took a moment for them to notice. It was Uraraka who pointed Midoriya out to the others. He gave them a thumbs up.

Shinso grinned back at him and gave him a thumbs up too. After all, it was only because of Midoriya that he was there to being with.

But everyone in UA had passed the first part to the exam. Midoriya was relieved that class 1-B hadn't been entered in the same arena as class 1-A. Knowing Monoma and the other competitive members of that class, they would likely target each other and cause more failures than really necessary.

Now, Midoriya was waiting in the side-lines again. The remaining examinees were permitted a small break for the second part of the exam, allowing time for the officials to prepare everything for the final portion.

Ms Joke's laughter was ringing in his ears when the set up in the stadium pretty much *collapsed* before him, resulting in a mock disaster

zone for a rescue style examination.

“You alright there, Canary?!” she laughed as Midoriya held his hand over his heart. He had thought there was a real *earthquake* or something going on.

Siren was mimicking her, doing that iconic, chirping laughter of hers, as she remained, undisturbed on his shoulder. She’d disappeared earlier to join Kouda in his attempt at the exam. The thought that Siren had technically taken the provisional licensing exam almost made him laugh too.

“Ah, so you *are* here.”

Midoriya flinched, slowly but surely, he looked up, and his eyes met those of a Shiketsu student – that purple haired one from right at the beginning. He must have failed… there was no other reason for him to be up here.

“May we talk?” the boy questioned. He was still wearing his hero costume and looking a little battered. The first exam must have been a struggle for him.

Midoriya looked to Mr Aizawa for advice.

He narrowed his eyes. “As long as you both stay in sight.”

Midoriya nodded and got up from his seat, squeezing past Ms Joke and hurrying over to the strange boy. He had put his hands in his pocket and walked down the stairs of the seating area, slowly wandering around the side of it as he casually cast his eyes down towards the ongoing examination.

“My name is Shishikura,” he said, introducing himself. “And you are Canary. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

Midoriya gulped and nodded uncertainly. This *Shishikura* radiated a rather menacing atmosphere. Most of the Shiketsu students seemed to, actually.

“I know sign language,” was the next thing he said.

Midoriya blinked – *what?!*

“It’s an optional module at Shiketsu,” he continued, “I’m surprised that UA doesn’t offer it. It’s a useful skill to have in stealth missions,

where communicating out loud could put you at a disadvantage."

Yeah… that was a very good point. Maybe Midoriya could ask if UA could offer a course as some kind of extracurricular activity, after school hours? They hadn't really set up any clubs yet – it could be quite a cool thing to attend…

Shishikura hesitated, glaring down at the arena and tutting loudly. "Look at Inasa – his responses are just too sloppy. It's proof of his lack of training."

Midoriya blinked down at the wind controlling boy that Shishikura was referring to. He looked alright to *him* – maybe his Quirk was a *little* dangerous in such an unstable area with those people and their fake injuries. But still.

"Most students, such as I, take the provisional licensing exam during their second year of their respective hero course. Inasa is powerful, yes, but he lacks the experience required for a good hero," he explained. "*You*, however, are different."

There was a tweet from Siren, who briefly caught Shishikura's gaze as he continued, "Like Inasa, you are incredibly powerful, and proved as such during the Sports Festival, against opponents with a much greater knowledge of their Quirks than you have. But you also have experience fighting against not one, but *two* incredibly powerful villains, and I'm not including anything from your time with the League of Villains… Muscular, and the hero killer, Stain."

[*I didn't fight either of them on my own*] Midoriya interrupted.

"No, but few heroes are forced to fight alone. And from what I know, neither would have been defeated without you."

[*How… do you know about Muscular?*] Midoriya signed slowly as they walked. Mr Aizawa and Ms Joke were a good distance from them now. But the arena was very large – they probably wouldn't manage to walk *all* the way around it.

He gave him a weird look for a moment, before saying, "I suppose you haven't had the chance to catch up on what information was revealed about your… encounters. How long has it been?"

Midoriya wasn't *quite* sure why he was having this conversation with this stranger, but oh well, [*A week since I got back. But since it all started… twenty-three days, I think*] Wow, that was longer than he

realised… That makes it *twenty days* since Midoriya had suffered from his injury…

They came to a halt, and Shishikura leant over the banister separating the arena from the seating area, watching the heroes in training below intently. Midoriya mimicked him.

“What did you think of… Stain?”

Ah, so *that* was what he really wanted to ask Midoriya about.

He hesitated. How should he phrase this…? [*Stain had… interesting motives. There was truth in his words, but he went about it in completely the wrong way. He labelled too many heroes as fakes without truly getting to understand why they perused that career*]

“Hm…” Shishikura nodded. “And what about you? What did *Stain* think of *you?”*

Midoriya frowned; it was an odd question. [*I don’t know. He tried to kill me at first but kept hesitating. Like he wasn’t sure if I deserved to live or not, under his principles*]

Shishikura leaned back from the banister, one hand still resting on it, his gaze not leaving Midoriya as he waited for him to sign some more. When he didn’t, he prompted him further. “And what are *your* principles?”

[*My principles?*] Midoriya frowned. He stood up straight and started to walk back towards Mr Aizawa and Ms Joke.

“Why do you want to be a hero, Canary?”

[*Well… I’ve always wanted to be a hero – ever since I was little. I used to really look up to All Might. Now I see so many other heroes who follow similar… principles. They sacrifice everything to save others; give their all to any stranger they come across, who might need it. I wanted to be someone who could do that; someone who could save others with a smile. My lack of a Quirk stopped me*]

No further words were exchanged between the two for a moment. They stopped to watch a new development in the exam. Gang Orca had just arrived to really stir things up.

But then, Shishikura frowned, “Why did it stop you?”

Midoriya looked back at him, [*I can't be a hero without a Quirk*]

"But why not?"

He blinked at him.

"I wanted to know what you thought of Stain," Shishikura admitted. "He… intrigues me. When I saw you were here, I was eager to hear what you thought of him. But *I* thought you would be taking part in the exam."

[*My voice has been damaged*] Midoriya explained, [*I can't use my Quirk*]

"Yes, but why should that stop you?" the older hero student questioned. "I don't know *how* your voice has been *damaged*, but perhaps there is a way to take it back, given time, speech therapy, surgery, or all of the above. Even missing a tongue won't stop some people from talking," he sighed, like he had experience in the matter, completely oblivious to the fact that he was *spot on.* "So, if Stain deemed you worthy of being a hero – why are you stopping now? Why aren't you fighting *back?"*

Midoriya stared at him.

"Shishikura?!"

The two boys blinked at the exclamation, turning their heads to a rather worried looking man with greying hair, sitting nearby in the stands.

"Can you *please* stay nearby?" the man requested nervously. "And have you seen Camie around?"

"Sorry, Sir – no, I haven't, Sir," Shishikura replied. It must have been his teacher from Shiketsu. "Thank you for talking with me, Canary," he said, turning back to Midoriya.

Midoriya just nodded in reply. He guessed this was where they parted ways, because the second-year student quickly turned on his heel and marched up the rows of chairs towards his teacher, still muttering about a girl called *Camie*.

Mr Aizawa and Ms Joke weren't that far away, so Midoriya hurried back over to them, almost running right into an official who was busy marking students down in the exam. But Midoriya hesitated before he started to clamber back to his seat.

Once grasping Ms Joke's attention, he signed to her, [*I'm just going to go down to the bathrooms*]. And she turned to Mr Aizawa to translate. He gave him a nod of permission, and Midoriya hurried away to do just that.

The halls were difficult to navigate, but he found his way around eventually. It's just that it was a rather long drive there, and he was quite sure the exam wasn't that far from its end.

He was quick about it, because he had missed enough of the second part of the exam as it was, talking with Shishikura. But he was distracted yet *again*, by someone he quite literally walked into, just outside the doors to the bathrooms.

It was that blonde Shiketsu girl from the beginning – this time in a rather tight and revealing bodysuit. What was she doing here, whilst the exam was ongoing? Ah, perhaps this is Camie! Maybe she failed the exam too and was supposed to be with her teacher and classmate…

Camie's face lit up when she realised who had just walked into her, "Yay!" she exclaimed, "Canary – you're *here!"*

Midoriya gave her an awkward smile and waved – oh dear, another fan.

Ah! But if Camie goes to Shiketsu too, then maybe she knows sign language! Of course, Shishikura said it was an *optional* module, but it was worth a shot! [*Hi, sorry – I didn't mean to walk into you*]

Camie just blinked at him. She didn't take the module then… "I'm a super big fan!" she just continued, leaning down a little so she was at eye level with him – she was rather tall. But she sounded… weirdly familiar.

"Can I have your autograph?" she questioned eagerly.

Midoriya hesitated, running his hand through his hair sheepishly, before he nodded.

"Awesome," she said. "Follow me – I've got a pen and paper in my bag!"

He sighed; he might as well do this for her now, rather than be ambushed again after the exam was over. So, he followed her down the hall – to the right, to the… left… Where were they going exactly?

Midoriya was pretty sure the changing rooms, which was where she probably left her bag, was back near the bathrooms. Now, if he paid much attention to the noise of the ongoing exam, he noticed it was getting much louder – as if they were in the cavity between the arena itself and the various facilities that the rest of the building supported, like this wall was all that separated them from the action. Midoriya had seen Gang Orca bust out of it at some point. Yeah, he was pretty sure she'd taken a wrong turn. But she didn't *look* like she was lost.

Midoriya tapped her on the shoulder. Camie hesitated and turned around, a look of confusion on her expression.

He started to sign his concerns, when he remembered that she wouldn't understand.

"Oh, *Canary*…" said Camie.

Midoriya frowned up at her – it was hard to see the look on her face; it was rather dark over here. Yeah… this didn't feel right; he didn't like this.

But there was enough light for him to see her face literally melt before her eyes; her stature shrink before him; yet remained in that skin-tight body suit.

Midoriya's own face was morphing too – into one of absolute shock and *horror*.

Because standing before him, was someone that he would have been more than happy to go a *little* more than a week without seeing.

"…it's so good to see you again!" Toga exclaimed.

Chapter End Notes

Yes, I know I'm *sorry* it just happens ok?? Where else was I supposed to end the chapter?!

Distracts you with ART!

First up is littlemusic…meiyou again! This time we have a lovely doodle of Owl!

We have a lot of Jiro editions today, but I'm not complaining. Next is eddrw with a sketch of Jiro – which may or may not be Canary related, I don't know but I love it anyways so here it is.

Then Seris is back with an *awesome* but also really sad drawing of Jiro singing in the radio DX

With a break from the Jiro-s, AmyStarSmith brings us a super cute little doodle of Siren!

Quetzal (now with an archive name **- quetzal_coatl**) is also here with an adorable drawing of the canaries!

You expect **Thelovypop17** to not be here? Ha, no – because she is amazing and here's her doodle of Canary with his mask and that's not the only one because she also has a really pretty sketch of Midoriya – still fighting on!

Finally, **Pigeonat** and Eri wish you all a Merry Christmas (even if they are a little early yet)!

Confidence

Chapter Notes

Welcome to the infamous chapter forty – which *should* be the very last chapter.

News flash – *it's most definitely not.*

Anyways, I'm honestly really sorry for all the cliff-hangers; I know it's annoying, but I don't have any other places to end the chapter!

Think of it like this – a graph plotting the action levels across the time scale of the stories. Chapters split this graph up; drawing a line right through it. It's important that it's split up accurately, or else readers can lose interest because it feels disconnected and boring.
You can split the story up at the top of peaks, the beginnings of them, or the end. Occasionally, it can also be split in the middle of a lull. Because of how active this story is, chapters just often start and end between the peaks, resulting in cliff-hangers. *I cannot organise it any other way*. And no, I won't just post a 13k chapter in order to span the entirety of a peak rather than ending at the summit – I don't have the time to sacrifice to do that XD. I need to be one chapter ahead of schedule at all times, so that if I'm unable to write during the week for some reason, I've got something prepared. Splitting a chapter up like this really saves my *butt* so here we are.

But… looking at the chapters ahead – that was probably the last –

** glances at chapter 42 looming up behind me **

– *one of* the last major cliff hangers!

** laughs nervously, shoving 42 back in its box **

Yeah…

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Midoriya took a few steps back, stumbling over his own feet in the surprise of it. Meanwhile Siren took off from his shoulder hovering protectively in between the two of them.

“Aw, it’s your birdy!” she cried. “I *love* birdies!”

He narrowed his eyes, “*Himiko.”*

Toga *shrieked*. “I knew you loved me really! Come on, Canary! Let’s go!”

Midoriya let a growl from his throat. He couldn’t physically *say* the word *Toga* – but *Himiko* was a little easier.

She bounded a little closer. “Oh, I’ve *missed* you! I don’t like that *mask* though…” an odd sternness came over her. Suddenly, she was pointing a knife at him – Midoriya didn’t know where it had even *come* from! “Get rid of it; it hides the prettiest part of your face!”

Siren took that moment to attack. She let out some kind of battle cry as she rocketed forwards.

Toga made a noise of disgust, trying to bat her away with her blade, “Hey!” she exclaimed in clear annoyance, waving her arms about.

Whilst she was distracted, Midoriya prepared to turn tail and run. He had to get back to where there was at least *security cameras!*

As he ran around the large, circular corridor, he glanced over his

shoulder to see if the villain was following him… but she wasn't. But he knew Toga – he knew how she worked – so he skidded to a halt and swung his fist blindly. If she wasn't behind him, she had to already be *in front.*

But Midoriya's fist didn't connect with Toga's face, missing her by inches as she dived forwards; her shining blade cutting through his hair, but not his skin, leaving feathers in her wake.

Where was Siren?

But Midoriya didn't have time to answer that question. He skidded to the side, avoiding another lunge. However, he'd had just enough of dodging and evading. The haunting words of Shishikura filled his mind –

Why aren't you fighting back?

– a fortitude filled him, and *finally*, he did.

He was marching *forwards* with determined swings of his fists, trying to reach Toga, who artfully evaded his attacks as she made her own. They were in a complete stalemate – neither quite reaching the other.

"Ooh it's like we're *dancing*," Toga leered. A dance with *death* perhaps – and Midoriya hadn't been dancing for a long time now.

And now Siren was back – Midoriya had been worried for a second there. But she was flying all wrong and wonky. Despite that, she quite literally threw herself at Midoriya's attacker.

Her little talons drew a speck of blood on Toga's cheek. With another infuriated growl, the villain's attention was diverted towards the bird for the millisecond that Midoriya needed.

He'd been watching his friends spar yesterday, during their hero training. Kirishima felt bad for him when he saw him all alone – and had called him over. With a short break from super moves, he was fighting Uraraka, who had become rather proficient at various forms of martial arts. By no means a master, but she knew how to get things done. There was a move she'd used that rendered even the unstoppable force of Kirishima motionless – a sort of twist of the

wrist, using her opponent's body against them.

Midoriya was a quick learner.

– But it would have worked better if Uraraka hadn't used it on Toga before…

Because instead of her, it was now Midoriya who was face down on the floor, his arms pinned behind his back, whilst his opponent giggled manically. He struggled against her hold. But thankfully, Siren was still around – she turned in the air and whizzed back towards Toga like a feathered bullet. But with snake like reflexes, the villain managed to grasp her from the air – both canaries were in her claws.

She squeezed Siren like a stress ball. "Come *on*, Canary," she sighed, "you're just being difficult now. Let's *go* already."

That was when Siren bit her harshly on her finger.

She yelped in pain and surprise, flinging her across the hallway. She crashed into the wall, falling to the ground with a squeak and a soft thud.

"*SIREN!"* Midoriya cried. The word may have come out of his mouth strangely, lacking the *s* and muffling the *n*, but the anguish was clear.

But neither he nor Toga could make another move, before the wall separating them from the oblivious examination, shattered with a chorus of cries and a dramatic *boom!*

Toga leapt out of the way to save herself from the rubble. Immediately, Midoriya skidded across the floor over to his fallen canary, grasping her form as a sizable piece of wall tumbled to where she had been lying.

No one on the outside had noticed that there had been people in that blast radius who weren't involved in the exam yet. So, ignoring the pain of soon-to-be bruises and the sizable cut on his forehead, Midoriya scrambled to his feet, lowering Siren into his jacket pocket to keep her safe. He charged out into the main arena through the hole in the wall. There were heroes there – licenced or not.

What Midoriya *hoped* was for Toga to be unconscious. What he *expected* was for her to realise it was a lost cause and scamper out of sight. However, he did not factor in that this girl was freaking *crazy*.

Bounding out from the rubble and avoiding what seemed to be a burst water pipe, the villain continued on her pursuit of Midoriya, tossing a blade in Midoriya's direction with startling accuracy. It cut at his cheek – his whole one – ripping the fabric of Shoji's mask and drawing the slightest bit of blood, mirroring Toga's scratch marks.

But when Midoriya saw the girl reappear, it was not Toga's face, but *Camie's* that appeared. Midoriya didn't know how her Quirk worked… with the villain's fascination with blood, it wasn't hard to conclude that the two had a correlation. In which case, what had happened to the *real* Camie?

Now wasn't the time, however, to be worrying about such things, because Toga, stubbornly masquerading as Camie, was being as ferocious as ever. From her white boots, she pulled an array of shining knives, and with a grin, lunged at Midoriya with the one in her right hand, keeping the others secure in her left.

Midoriya picked up his graceful routine of dodging and evading initially. However, being out in the open didn't make his confidence waver one bit, and it wasn't long before he begun to fight back, being cautious that the blades didn't come any closer to his skin than they already had. It was a tough game to play, *especially* when there was something *else* Midoriya had to keep an eye on too – the exam.

No one really noticed at first. They were so busy focusing on their own tasks, that they overlooked the sight of two supposed heroes fighting. There was a *lot* of fighting going on – but there *shouldn't* have been between examinees. Even worse, these *weren't* examinees… At least, they weren't supposed to be.

"Hey! What's going on?!" called a member of Gang Orca's pod, aiming his cement gun in Camie's – no, *Toga's* – and Midoriya's direction in confusion.

Midoriya took the moment to distance himself slightly; prepared to try and explain what was going on. But in the adrenaline rush, he completely forgot one vital fact – he *couldn't*.

With a sly grin, Toga tossed another blade at Midoriya. She was fast, but Midoriya was too. Once again, it simply scraped at the fabric of his mask, tearing it further.

On the ground, kicked in this direction likely by Midoriya himself during the rush of it all, was a broken pipe – once possibly belonging to where the water was spurting out of the wall (it was a poor design,

really). In a split-second decision, Midoriya stamped his foot down on that pipe so it flung up into his hands, just in time.

If his mental calculations were correct, Toga would throw the next knife and miss by millimetres once more, scraping at his good cheek. If she did that, it could hit the sidekick who stood behind them. So, with the pipe in hand, he managed to knock the blade out of harms way, sending it clattering to the floor.

He was secretly rather proud of that move.

Toga simply smiled, the final knife poised and ready.

Midoriya narrowed his eyes. She wanted a fight – and oh, she would *get* one.

Aizawa stood up in his seat.

Was that… *Midoriya?!*

His eyes widened, “We need to stop the exam.”

“What?” Ms Joke scoffed, raising an eyebrow. “Why? What’s going –”

“Down there – it’s Midoriya.”

“Midori –” and now Emi’s eyes widened too. “What’s he…?”

Midoriya – being a problem child as always – had disappeared to go to the toilet far too long ago now. Aizawa had hoped that he’d just gotten lost. What he *hadn’t* expected, was for him to *turn up in the arena*, fighting ruthlessly with a knife wielding Shiketsu student, whilst all who had noticed, watched on in bewilderment – the *idiots!*

“Canary’s smart,” Aizawa explained as he leapt over the row of seats in front of him. “He’s in there for a reason – and that girl seems to be it.”

Ms Joke followed him nimbly, “A villain? In the provisional hero licencing exam?!”

“Seems like it,” Aizawa agreed. He started to unravel his scarf. “Go to

the officials in the control booth – tell them what's going on. I'll handle this."

Emi hesitated, but nodded, turned on her heel and started to jog around the incredibly wide arena to reach the man in charge.

Aizawa tied the end of his scarf to the banister that separated the seating area from the arena itself. Making sure it was no longer caught around his neck, he used it to abseil down the length of the wall. Yes, it meant he sacrificed his capture weapon, but it also meant he could get down there to his student at a far quicker rate than taking the stairs, and the convoluted maze of corridors this stadium held.

He reached the ground, almost tripping over the rubble littered there as he turned to get his bearings. Midoriya hadn't been far, he had been right over –

…there?

But then there was a loud alarm filling his ears, "Ahem…" groaned the monotone voice of the head of the event. "At present every last H.U.C member has been saved from impending danger. Therefore, I declare that the test is *finally* over…"

Aizawa stared for a moment, before getting a hold of himself and hurrying over, ignoring the further instructions that were spilt. With the distance Emi had been from the booth, it could take a little longer before the situation was properly explained to the officials.

That Shiketsu girl… he didn't know where she had gone. But Midoriya didn't seem to be preoccupied with her now. Instead, it seemed that he had jumped right into the examination, to pull one of Emi's kids out of harms way, as Todoroki and Inasa failed to respond accurately to how Todoroki's fire would affect the movement of Inasa's wind…

The other hero students around him looked over in utter confusion. Most of them had been fighting Gang Orca's sidekicks whilst all of this was happening, completely unaware of Midoriya's actions.

Aizawa sighed internally. This kid would be the end of him, that was for sure.

“Midoriya – where did she go?” Aizawa insisted as soon as they made eye contact. He’d just handed that kid – Shindo, his name might have been – over to one of his classmates. Now, he was busy clutching at his mask (which was rather tattered and scorched) and holding it in place. He looked relatively unharmed.

With his free hand, Midoriya pointed towards a gaping hole in the wall. It was probably where they had come from in the first place.

Aizawa frowned. Perhaps that fire tornado had been sent not only in Shindo’s direction, but Midoriya’s and the villain’s too. It must have dispersed the two, and Midoriya decided to prioritise the safety of Shindo rather than the capture of the villain, who must have taken the moment to escape.

He looked back to Midoriya. “Stay with the hero students,” he ordered, turned on his heel, and charged after the girl.

He ran through corridor after corridor, down every path that she could have possibly taken in such a short space of time. What baffled Aizawa, was how much seemed to have happened whilst he was just *abseiling down the wall.*

Eventually, he reached the exit. There were security guards there, who quickly informed him that, to their knowledge, no one had been in or out since the exam began. They had radios and had already been told that there may be an intruder in their midst… but she could not be located.

Aizawa marched back to the arena, balling his fists in frustration as he did so. Not only had the villain gotten away, but *Midoriya* had dealt with it all by himself, with no back up, no support, and no one there to save him –

– *again.*

Ooooh – Midoriya was in *so much trouble*.

“I cannot let you out of my sight for one second,” Mr Aizawa *seethed*, his eyes twitching in irritation (could Midoriya just use this moment to mention how *weird* he looked without his scarf on?). “The moment

I do, you go and do something like *this.”*

They were alone in some kind of office. The large, glass windows overlooked the arena down below, where the hero students had now gathered to collect the results to their provisional licencing exam.

When Midoriya’s friends saw him in the crowd, they had been about as confused as everyone else seemed to be. Shinso tried asking what was going on, but Midoriya insisted he’d explain later. He… wasn’t sure what he’d be *allowed* to say, considering how well the Stain incident went down…

“The first time, you go off and defeat the *hero killer, Stain*,” continued his teacher. “Then, at the summer camp, not only did you take down *Muscular*, but you also got yourself *kidnapped*. *Then*, you turn up *two weeks later* at UA with a little girl by your side who had seemingly rarely seen the light of day before she met you. *Now*, you try and go to the *toilet* and end up in yet *another* fight for your life.”

Midoriya fiddled nervously with his mask. He’d pretty much ruined it now. Well, he’d managed to stretch it enough to tie the ripped part up in a knot, but it was so scorched that it was threatening to completely fall apart at any moment.

“Here,” Mr Aizawa sighed.

Midoriya blinked down at his hands. There was a marker pen there and – ah – an unused flip board just across the room.

“*Explain*,” he insisted.

Nervously, Midoriya hurried over to the paper, and after another uncertain glimpse back at the furious face of his teacher, he started to write.

I bumped into a girl called Camie. Her teacher was looking for her earlier, but I think she just went down to the toilets. She said she was a fan and asked for an autograph, and that she had a pen and paper in her bag, which we went to get. I didn’t know my way around, so she led the way. However, she did not take me to where her bag was, and instead the corridor behind that hole in the wall. We fought. I climbed out so there would be more heroes around but then –

“I’m going to stop you there,” Mr Aizawa suddenly interrupted.

Midoriya jumped back from the paper immediately, almost bumping

right into Mr Aizawa as he did so. He'd written in rather small handwriting, respectively, filling up most of the page with what he had said already.

"Why did you fight?" pressed Mr Aizawa.

Ah, yes, that was probably a good thing to specify.

Midoriya quickly pulled off the used piece of paper, turned it over, and wrote a hurried explanation.

That was not the real Camie. It was Himiko Toga, from the League of Villains.

Mr Aizawa stared at what he'd written for a moment. Eventually, he sighed deeply, and put his head in his hands. "Is it her Quirk? She can transform into people?"

Midoriya uncapped the pen again.

I don't know. That was why I didn't think it could be her at first. But she partially transformed back before I ran out into the arena.

"Then where's the real Camie?"

Midoriya was disappointed that he could do nothing but shrug.

"And… Toga – I'm guessing you know her?"

Midoriya gulped, hesitating before writing an answer.

She was one of the villains who kept me captive.

"Of course…" Mr Aizawa groaned. He looked like he was having a migraine.

There was a knock on the door. Through it, shortly came a rather exhausted looking man with hair at a length mid-way between Midoriya's own and that of Mr Aizawa. His gaze drifted lazily between the two of them for a moment, before resting on the latter.

"Is the matter resolved?" he asked, and Midoriya recognised his voice as the man who was making the announcements earlier.

"…*No*," Mr Aizawa replied, in a tone that suggests that it should have been obvious.

The man sighed. He turned to Midoriya, “Izuku Midoriya,” he begun, “my name is Yokumiru Mera. I am a representative of the Hero Public Safety Commotion… Our records say that you should have been taking part in the examination today…”

“Yes, except we sent a letter in explaining that Midoriya was unable to take part because of his injury,” Mr Aizawa snapped. “However, as you can see he was perfectly capable of dealing with this entire situation *on his own* – due to a lack of proper security that allowed an *A-Rank villain* into your facility!”

“They have been identified then?” the man droned. He couldn’t sound *less* interested.

“Himiko Toga – a *psychopathic murderer* and a member of the *League of Villains*.”

Ah, was… Mr Aizawa actually angry at *them* rather than *Midoriya?*

“This is one of the villains who kept Midoriya *captive!* And he had to deal with her *alone!* Not only that, but he also stepped in to *rescue a hero student in immediate danger* within *your* examination – which was the *only* reason he let her get away!”

Midoriya stared. Wow… did he *really* think that highly of him?

But this Mera guy just gawked at Mr Aizawa. He wasn’t blinking; *that was kind of creepy.*

“Eraser Head, do you think you could explain the situation to the police?” he asked after just a little too long.

“They’re here already?”

He nodded slowly. “Depending on their verdict, we have a proposal to make…”

Mr Aizawa hesitated. He turned back to Midoriya and narrowed his eyes. Midoriya mimicked his gaze; trying to convey telepathically the words *letting me out of your sight again, are you?*

He pointed at him, “Stay. *Here.”*

Midoriya just grinned and nodded.

“Ok, quickly then,” sighed his teacher, grasping the piece of poster paper that Midoriya had been scribbling his explanations on as he

went. Mera led him back out of the room at a much slower pace than Mr Aizawa was probably comfortable at.

The door closed behind them, and Midoriya was left alone in the office.

He sighed, pulling his mask from his face and letting it dangle around his neck. It could be stifling at times. However, the act of doing so caused it to fall apart in his hands – an inevitability, he supposed.

Midoriya gazed out of the full-length windows, and down at the group of hero students below. There was a large screen in front of them, and although it was a little too hard to make out from such a distance, he could guess that it listed the names of who had just passed the exam he interrupted.

He groaned, shoving his ruined mask in his pocket. – he just *had* to make things difficult for himself didn't he?

There was a disgruntled tweet, and he, in that moment, finally remembered – *oh my God, Siren!*

In a panicked scramble, Midoriya pulled the little bird from his pocket.

Stupid – stupid – stupid! How could he have *possibly* forgotten?! Oh, poor *Siren! Every time* something like this happened, Siren suffered some kind of backlash. It was probably because she was a bird barely bigger than his hand but acted like she was miniaturised *fighter jet*.

Siren did *not* look pleased when Midoriya finally had her sprawled out in his cupped palms. However, she was quick to get up, and started grooming at one of her wings – the green feathers stained worryingly red.

Midoriya would have to take her to the vets as soon as this mess was sorted. Poor thing – but at the same time, he couldn't help but thank her. Things could have ended up a lot worse if Siren hadn't served as such a good distraction.

He had to wait a *rather* long time for Mr Aizawa, and a few others beside him, finally returned. He had just been pacing around the room as he waited, staring at Siren as he did so, glancing occasionally at the ticking clock on the wall as time crept by.

As soon as they returned, he ran right up to his teacher (who had his

scarf back now), holding out Siren to him without a need for further explanation.

Mr Aizawa sighed, “Ok, we’ll take her to the vets as soon as get back to UA.”

Midoriya nodded in agreement, and only because Siren had been trying to hop up there on her own several times whilst he was waiting, he allowed her to nestle in his hair. Mr Aizawa raised an eyebrow at him as the bird hid herself from view. He just shrugged.

“Midoriya, please sit down… so I can too…” said Mera, immediately pulling a chair out from underneath the long table that spanned the office. Actually, was it a meeting room? Not that it mattered – there were other things Midoriya should be focusing on anyways.

Mr Aizawa sat next to Midoriya, whilst Mr Mera was opposite, beside a rather strict looking woman in a sleek suit and tie, her face blank behind dark sunglasses that she *really* didn’t need to be wearing inside. All of their gazes lingered on Midoriya’s exposed face for a little longer than he would have liked, but he tried to ignore it.

“Now… as you are aware, UA officially enrolled you in the hero course at the start of this new term, despite your absence…” Mera paused to yawn loudly. “Alongside that, you were also automatically entered into this provisional licencing exam. There was still a place for you, even though UA *did* inform us that you wouldn’t be participating… after all…”

There was a moment of awkward silence as he rubbed his eyes. He seemed rather tired. It took that woman clearing her throat to snap him back to reality.

“Sorry we took so long…” Mera continued. “We had to talk to various *people* from across different departments to get permission for this. But… long story short because I’d really quite like to go home now, because of all your actions over the past few months, public support and general… heroism, on top of the skills you unwittingly showed us today… We think it’s safe to say that you are just as ready as the other hero course students, if not more than, to gain a provisional licence…”

Midoriya could have sworn his heart stopped for a second there.

A… *hero licence?!*

“I just got off the phone with your mother,” Mr Aizawa added. “She wasn’t too keen on the idea, but after having a quick conversation with your father, she gave permission for you to complete your transfer to heroics and accept a provisional licence, should you choose to do so.”

Midoriya stood up, knocking his chair to the ground and slamming his hands on the table, *staring* at Mr Aizawa.

Was he *actually serious?!*

But then he hesitated, and frantically pointed to his uncovered injury.

“Midoriya,” his teacher sighed, “there is a good chance that you will be able to recover your Quirk, given time and speech therapy. Furthermore, this offer isn’t just because of your powers. They’re willing to give you a licence to fight back, for times like this – with or *without* a Quirk.”

Oh my God – Oh my God – Oh my God!

Midoriya was going to *pass out!*

This couldn’t be happening – this had to be a *dream*; it *had* to be!

“You will be required to attend a few of the extra training sessions that those who failed the second half of the provisional licencing exam are obligated to take for a total of three months… How many depends on how well you perform…” Mera explained. “But because of the continuous villainous activity you seem to find yourself involved in, we have received permission to give you a licence *now*, to clean up any legal mess that the incident today could result in and allow you to act lawfully in emergencies… Besides, we need a lot of new, bright heroes to fill the gap All Might left behind…”

No one spoke again for a moment or so, whilst Midoriya just stared at the official.

Eventually, the lady in the suit cleared her throat again, and pulled from her pocket, a small, laminated card.

Mera took the card from her, “Canary is your chosen hero name, correct?”

Midoriya nodded frantically, hands *itching* to see that card.

But more silence followed.

“Would you like it?” Mera *finally* asked.

“…*Yeah!”* Midoriya exclaimed, which made everyone jump.

Mera seemed almost *scared* as he handed over the card. But Midoriya’s hands were trembling as he accepted it. And there was the picture on his student ID – a face lacking the marks that now marred him – and the name Izuku Midoriya, beside the *official hero name* – Canary.

“What’s *taking* them so long?” groaned Mina loudly.

Mr Aizawa had told them all to wait by the bus for him to return. There were a couple of security guards milling around still; keeping an eye on them, but other than that, everyone else was gone. Shinso was kind of glad of it. All those other hero schools were rather overbearing. He didn’t know how *Midoriya*, of all people, could deal with such attention *all the time.*

“Mr Aizawa is with Midoriya at the moment!” Iida explained loudly, for like, the fifth time. “Something very serious happened and it is important that we show our support!”

“I can’t believe there was someone from the *League of Villains* here,” gaped Jiro, repeating the information that they had been informed of by the officials after their results were handed out. Jiro had finished staring at her provisional licence card and was now using it to gently fan herself as they waited.

Shinso, however, was still pretty transfixed by his.

He had a *hero licence.*

Granted, a provisional one, but who cares about those minute details? *Brain Blank* was now officially his hero name – and he couldn’t help but smile at the fact.

But yeah, his friend had just been attacked by one of the villains who kept him captive for over two weeks so he probably should have been thinking about that a little more…

Speaking of which –

"Hey, there he is!" Uraraka exclaimed, waving at Midoriya and Mr Aizawa, who had just appeared from inside the stadium.

And he wasn't… he wasn't wearing his mask.

Shinso could see the ragged thing sticking out of his jacket pocket. It must have lost the will to live. Shinso didn't blame it.

What was *weirder*, was that Midoriya didn't seem to care. He tried to run right over to them, but Mr Aizawa put a hand on his shoulder to pull him back and talk to him for a moment longer.

But Shinso couldn't wait. Ignoring Iida's protests, Shinso pocketed his provisional licence and sprinted over to his teacher and his friend.

"– *Seriously*, just stay out of trouble, for *once* in your life," was the end of the conversation Shinso caught onto.

"You know that's not going to get through that thick skull of his," Shinso grinned.

Mr Aizawa just rolled his eyes and Midoriya mimicked Shinso's smile. And oh my *god* that was terrifying; it made Shinso smile even wider.

"What's going on?" he questioned after a moment, his gaze flickering between the two.

Mr Aizawa just sighed, shoved his hands in his pockets, and left to march over towards the bus, and everyone else, who were waiting expectantly, all eighteen of them, staring at Midoriya.

And he was still smiling, without a care in the world.

"*What?"* Shinso almost demanded with a nervous laugh. "Is this really the time to be so happy? Didn't you… almost die or something?"

Midoriya laughed, the brief opening of his mouth flashing the dramatic damage. But he just *didn't care.* [*What's new?*] he signed.

“Well… true…” Shinso frowned. “Should… I be scared?”

“Maybe,” Midoriya shrugged – yeah, he said that *out loud.*

Shinso just blinked at him. “Ok, seriously – what happened?”

Midoriya’s grin grew wider, and from his pocket, he pulled a small, blue card.

Shinso’s jaw *dropped.*

Midoriya laughed even harder, shoving the card in Shinso’s hands.

Oh my *God* – it seriously *was* a provisional hero licence… *Canary’s* provisional hero licence!

“But… but you didn’t even take the exam!”

[*Apparently I handled myself pretty well with the villain around*] Midoriya explained. He had to sign it twice, because Shinso was too busy staring at the licence the first time. [*As long as I go to a few of those… special course lessons or whatever they are – then it’s mine to keep!*]

He took the card back off Shinso, who was still too shocked to celebrate. “But… what about your Quirk? You can’t use it!”

Midoriya shrugged, pocketing the licence to free up his hands, [*Hopefully I will be able to again, one day. Right now – I guess I’ll just have to deal without. I have for this long. What do one or two years more mean in the long run?*]

“OH MY GOD, CANARY?!” screamed Jiro as she charged over, almost knocking Shinso over as she ran right into him. “Mr Aizawa just said you had a licence – why do you have a – *oh my God is that a hero licence?!”*

Midoriya was holding it again now, grinning stupidly.

Soon enough, nearly the whole class was surrounding him – not one of them making a comment on his exposed face.

Shinso stumbled backwards and out of the crowd not long after. His gaze soon met that of the one person who *wasn’t* smiling –

Bakugo.

They glared at each other for a moment, before Bakugo caved, and

turned back towards the bus, head lowered as he grumbled something bitterly to himself.

Of course, he had *failed* the examination. Midoriya didn't even *take* it, and he had the one thing that Bakugo didn't – all without a Quirk.

Shinso smirked and turned back to Midoriya. He was still smiling. Man, it really was a scary smile. But he just seemed so *happy* that… no matter how it looked, it just made everyone else want to grin too.

Everyone should aspire to have a smile like that.

Chapter End Notes

The ART SECTION

Thelovypop17 is here with a drawing of Shinso saying hi to Midoriya!

Then **Leah1705** has drawn a super cute doodle of Eri with a necklace like Shinso's! (Totally not gonna do that at some point…)

Little Secrets Can Have Big Values

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

8 days since the return

It was the first day of a new term, and this was not where Midoriya expected to be at this point… he had just started getting used to it all – and now it had all changed *again*.

It had now been, according to his calculations, around twenty-four days since he received this injury of his. He had finally come to the conclusion that he wasn't going to be a hero after all; that he'd make it through UA and come out the other side with the knowledge to become… maybe a police officer or something. But *now?* Well, things had changed.

Now *Canary* really *was* a hero in training – and what meant oh so much more to *him*, was that he earnt that title, not through the powerful Quirk he'd become famous for, no, it was for his own skills – *Quirkless*. Mr Aizawa said that he could be a hero *without a Quirk*.

And with this knowledge under his belt, that bubble of euphoria returned quickly to his self – rising up in his chest; it was almost enough to make him *burst*.

He had a hero licence – he had a hero licence – he had a hero licence!

The *only* negative thing to come out of the provisional licencing exam was Siren's injury. It didn't seem to faze her much though. When she came back from the vets, late that evening with Mr Aizawa, a little bandage wrapped around her wing – those beady eyes radiated a *fury* that could not be held within such a tiny body, a look that villains should learn to *fear*.

Midoriya thought it was funny – Mina said it would haunt her nightmares.

Oh, yeah, and another thing – poor Todoroki didn't manage to earn *his* licence. Then again, he was fighting with another student in the exam, so he kind of had it coming. But the mistakes he made were what resulted in Midoriya ultimately getting his hero licence – so he wasn't complaining *too* much…

And Kacchan didn't get his licence either…

Midoriya wasn't quite sure how to feel about that.

But people had noticed the sudden change in him; he could tell. Even the most unlikeliest of people had seen it.

"You're… different now, Canary."

Midoriya blinked at Eri. She stared back, tilting her head to one side, her green pen hovering a few inches from the paper that she'd been doodling Siren on, who posed dutifully before her.

The two were sitting in the common room of Heights Alliance. It was lunch time, and no one else was around. There was *no way* Midoriya was eating food in the lunch hall until he had his cheek fixed, at the very least. Often, Shinso ate with him, and he hadn't been comfortable enough to let anyone else, despite Jiro's… insistence – Uraraka too, but she was a little less pushy about it. It kind of bugged Midoriya – can't she just… let him try and sort this out himself? Figure it all out in his own time? Maybe he was over thinking it all – she *had* stopped asking if they could all eat with him now; stopped being so clingy. He had to comprehend that… well, he had, in her point of view, *died*. Of *course,* she's keen to be around him now that he's back – he *came back from the dead*. She wasn't the only one though. Mina was just as insistent, and even people Midoriya didn't know so well, like Kaminari and Kirishima (although, Kirishima seemed really nice and knew when to back off, so that wasn't that much of an issue) were acting a little clingy. Shinso seemed to get it though. Consequently, Midoriya felt the most comfortable around him.

It all just… made him pretty angry – frustrated over what had happened. There were so many emotions going on at once that he wasn't really sure how to deal with it. He was happy that he was *back* and he had a provisional *hero licence* and a real shot at a future he could look forward to! But… it wasn't what he *could* have had. His voice… tantalisingly close – just out of reach. He couldn't wait for the week to be over, and he could finally get that surgery done. Removing the hole and fixing up this… *phantom tongue* thing would really help

with his speech therapy. At least, he hoped it would. And that was all he could do – hope.

“Mr Aizawa said you’re going to be a proper hero now,” Eri continued. Midoriya had phased out a bit; he blinked as he was brought back to reality. “I think you’re already a proper hero.”

Ok, now he’s going to *cry*.

Siren ruffled her feathers up with pride, like *she’d* raised Midoriya to be this way.

“But you seem happier now… and bouncy,” she added, staring at the flowers she’d drawn. “You smile lots, I think… But you still wear bandages.” Eri gazed back up at him now, eyes scrutinising the mask across his face. “They… don’t help.”

Midoriya instinctively reached up to his hidden cheek. He wasn’t actually wearing any bandages at all, but it was what she called the mask. In her point of view, it had a similar purpose – to cover up what he deemed unsightly.

“Does it… still hurt?” she asked, big, red eyes, full of worry.

Midoriya shook his head frantically, waving his hands about with no meanings behind the motion.

“Then why do you wear them?” Eri frowned. And then her little hand dropped the pen and reached up to his mask.

Midoriya froze, staying perfectly still as she paused, inches from the fabric.

She hesitated, “…Can I see?”

…Would that be a good idea? Would it scare her; set her off? But would refusing compromise her trust? Was he overthinking this? Probably.

This girl had been through hell – judging from the way she acted, flinching at every fast movement, and the lack of a smile upon her face, no matter the situation. It was like she had forgotten how to feel – or perhaps, never truly learnt.

But he was waiting too long. Reading what emotions she *did* present – those glistening in her eyes – Midoriya realised she did need to

understand. And so, he nodded.

Eri still wavered further, before finally reaching forward to slip in fingers beneath the hem of the elastic fabric, and slowly ease it off his jaw.

Once his injury was on full display, Eri leant back into her chair. There was no shock upon her expression, nor fear. She just looked on with child-like curiosity, lacking the innocent that belonged there.

She sat there, staring at it, for a good few minutes. Then, to Midoriya's surprise, she reached up to her own mouth, pulling at the corner of her lips in an attempt to expose as much teeth as Midoriya couldn't help but do. With the forced cavity, she said, "But you can talk like that."

Midoriya laughed softly, smiling at her deductions. The smile didn't scare her either.

So, confident it wouldn't frighten her. He leant forwards and opened his mouth, pointing at what was missing.

Eri cocked her head to one side as she gazed inside. After a few minutes, she stuck her tongue out, holding it between her fingers, and tried her best to say, "*No tongue.*"

Midoriya laughed again as he closed his mouth.

She nodded like her experiments had been successful, "It's hard to speak like that."

Midoriya nodded in reply.

They were quiet again for a while. Midoriya joined in on scribbling on her piece of paper. Eri just watched, but there was clearly something on her mind, because soon, she began to speak again. "You smile lots."

Midoriya hesitated, putting the pen down to give his undivided attention to the little girl. Well, not *completely* undivided – he always had an eye on Siren, although, he was pretty sure she'd fallen asleep now, due to the lack of interruptions.

"You're always smiling…" Eri continued, fiddling with the ends of her sleeves nervously. "Y-You smile now, when you're happy – but you smiled lots before too… even when you weren't. A-And when we were

scared; when we'd r-run away – you smiled then too. Why do you smile…?"

He wavered. How could Midoriya possibly reply to that? To a girl who knew no sign language and couldn't read well?

So, he lifted his hands up to his face, pointing as he smiled as wide as he could, despite how bad he knew it looked at the corner of his cheek. Then, he pointed back to Eri, poking at her cheeks too.

He smiled so that she could smile.

She seemed to understand, but then…

Mimicking Midoriya's movements, she lifted her hands to her face and pulled at her lips. She struggled like that for a moment, whilst Midoriya looked on in confusion. She gave up quickly.

"Sorry…" she sighed. "How do you smile, again?"

Midoriya stared for a moment, his own smile fading from his face.

He pulled her into a hug, running his hands through Eri's long, pale hair.

He'd just have to teach her how.

Iida wasn't pleased that Midoriya was *only* one minute early to afternoon registration.

Shinso was just pleased that his friend had decided to make his entrance as dramatic as possible by tossing the door open with a bang and giving them all a mock salute as he marched inside.

Eri scurried in the classroom behind him, with Siren cupped in her hands. The bird had her wings slightly open like she was flying along, despite the fact that she couldn't at the moment, whilst one was all bandaged up.

As Midoriya sat down in the seat in front of Shinso, and Eri placed Siren carefully on top of his desk, Mr Aizawa appeared, his sleeping bag slung over one shoulder.

Shinso didn't see why all the teachers insisted on taking the register, especially since they could *see* that every desk was occupied, but he did it anyway.

He was rather distracted by Eri though. She'd hurried over to Yaoyorozu's desk, behind Shinso's, to show her a drawing that she'd pulled out of the pocket of her pinafore. Yaoyorozu was quietly complimenting her as the register reached their row.

"Toru Hagakure?"

"Present, Mr Aizawa!" she exclaimed in her usually, excitable manner.

"Katsuki Bakugo?"

"Here," he droned – which was unlike him. Was he still pouting because he didn't get his hero licence? Because if so – *ha.*

"Izuku Midoriya?"

"Here!"

Shinso – and everyone else – *stared.*

Had he… had he *ever* answered to his name on the register?

"Hitoshi Shinso?"

"Err – yeah…"

"– and Momo Yaoyorozu."

"…Present, Sir."

"Great," Mr Aizawa sighed, *completely* ignoring the class' surprise about Midoriya *speaking.* "Your hero costumes are under maintenance after your provisional licencing exam. Grab your PE kit – we're doing a different kind of hero training today."

Everyone else was mildly disappointed at the lack of hero costumes, or curious as to what Mr Aizawa might have been talking about, but with this being the very first day of a new term (they'd had to sacrifice a lot of lessons that morning to Nedzu's *endless* introductory assembly), it

was expected for their curriculum to change a little bit. Well, Shinso didn't exactly have much experience in hero classes yet, but he certainly had more than Midoriya.

Speaking of which, Midoriya's eyes were *sparkling* as his mind was cast towards attending his very first hero lesson as *part of the class.*

Finally.

Quirkless hero training. The very thought made Bakugo want to blow something up – literally.

And Deku's *stupid face* when he heard those words – *uuggggghhhhhhh!*

They got to choose partners to spar with at the beginning, so Bakugo chose Kirishima. Deku had been purposely paired with Round Face though. Apparently, Mr Aizawa thought those two would both be at the top of the class. What the *hell* made him think that?! Sure, Round Face did that martial arts thing for her internship (freaking internships), but what the heck did Deku know?

Kirishima thought he was too focused on them to pay attention to him. He was wrong. Bakugo dodged his punch and quickly retaliated with a big right hook which sent Kirishima flying across their mat.

He groaned, "Not being able to use our Quirks *sucks!"*

"Tsk," was all Bakugo said in reply, trying to focus just on their training rather than the pestering thoughts that continued to plague the back of his mind.

Mr Aizawa had approached after seeing Kirishima being knocked to the ground. He helped him up. "Do that again, but in slow motion," he instructed.

Bakugo took a moment to actually do as he asked, because he was a little distracted by Deku's stupid little bird, bandaged up and perched on his teacher's shoulder. Averting his eyes, he gritted his teeth in frustration as he took his fighting stance. He dodged Kirishima's mockingly slow punch and had to force himself to slow down in own.

"Stop there," their teacher insisted. "Kirishima, grab his wrist – no, a

little further up – that's it. Remember that position. You're going to do it again, and this time, twist his wrist harshly and use his own momentum against him. If that doesn't knock him over, twist your foot around his ankle to take out his balance."

And so, the two stepped back, Kirishima threw his first punch – but then *Bakugo* grabbed his wrist, to his partner's surprise, and quickly brought him to the ground with a yelp.

Mr Aizawa blinked at them, "I meant Kirishima do that to you – not everything's a competition, Bakugo; you can learn through losing. I thought the provisional licencing exam would have taught you that much by now. Apparently not."

Bakugo, in frustration, cupped his hands to let off his explosive power – he found it calming, sometimes. But with a flash of red, Mr Aizawa stopped his Quirk.

"No Quirks," he snapped. "Everyone else seems to be managing it."

That just made Bakugo want to set something alight even *more*.

A few minutes later, and Bakugo was now the one on the ground, staring at the ceiling and stewing in his own feverish emotions.

"You alright, man?" Kirishima questioned, holding out a hand to pull him up. Bakugo could tell by the tone of his voice that he wasn't referring to the rough and tumble of the exercise.

"I'm fine, shut up," he hissed, but he took the hand anyway, not that he really needed it. Not at all.

"Hey, it's alright you know," Kirishima continued, his voice clashing against the distant laughs of Uraraka and Deku in the background. "A lot of stuff has happened to you – people kind of forget that with Midoriya around, but it's true."

"Shut up, I'm *fine,"* Bakugo repeated, taking a fighting stance again. He lunged forwards and Kirishima evaded. They threw punches and blocks like that for a while longer, lost in the motion of it all. *Kind of like Deku's dancing –*

The thought was what resulted in Kirishima's fist making contact with the side of his face, knocking him to the ground.

"Ah, shoot, man!" Kirishima exclaimed. "That was a little harsh,

sorry."

And now he was staring at the ceiling again. His vision was going all blurry – *damn this!*

Kirishima's hand was out again, but Bakugo didn't take it, "I don't need your help!" he lashed out.

Kirishima flinched back. Bakugo was aware of the stares being thrown in his direction.

"Ok, time to change partners," Mr Aizawa announced drearily.

"Seriously, if you ever need to talk –" Kirishima started.

"Shut up," was all Bakugo could say in reply.

"…Ok."

The lesson passed by quickly. He didn't really converse much with anyone else, just throwing punches and blocking – sometimes picking up a few tricks and using them against unsuspecting opponents. He got hit a few more times than he would have liked though. Everyone else suspected he had just let them get him once or twice just to give them a chance. It wasn't the truth.

"Alright, last switch," sighed their teacher. "Move to the mat to your right."

So, he did, focusing on the clock on the wall as they moved. Five minutes left – good. Then… what else did they have today? Just art and math, right? That doesn't require that much brain power…

"Sir, can I move over another one?" that was Eyebags – who was on the mat next to Bakugo.

"Just want to fight me?" Bakugo leered, "Wait your turn."

But then he looked up to see who *he* was against.

Deku waved back feebly.

Bakugo turned to Mr Aizawa, "Sir, can I move over another one?"

"No," was his harsh reply. The bird gave an affirmative tweet too. She

looked so freaking superior that Bakugo just wanted to *fry* her.

Eyebags gave him a *look* as he stared his fight with Kaminari, who was going on about him not being good enough for Shinso. He got kicked in the stomach pretty promptly.

Bakugo flexed the muscles in his hands as he turned his red-eyed gaze slowly over to Deku.

He was doing a rather similar exercise, fiddling with his fingers nervously, but his returning glare was anything but meek. It was strange; he'd certainly changed since they were younger. Bakugo wasn't keen on it.

He was also painfully aware that it wasn't only Shinso who continued to watch him from the corner of his eyes. Nearly every extra in the class cast a look in his direction every second or so. Mr Aizawa did so too – but *he* didn't know that Bakugo's and Deku's relationship went back any further than the Sports Festival.

Was that seriously the last time they properly communicated…? No, no – of course not. There was Kamino too, and everything that happened leading up to it. But no one really knew what had happened between them. There was what Shinso had *wisely* decided to spill… but that wasn't the full story, it just *wasn't*. They weren't there; they didn't know the truth! They made it out to be so much worse than it actually was. Then again, Deku had no clue that any of this had happened. In his point of view, the only reason everyone was giving them strange looks lined up with what Mr Aizawa knew.

Bakugo watched and waited, until eventually, he saw Deku take his stance for a fight – and Bakugo didn't bother doing the same. He lunged forwards – and Deku dodged. It made his teeth *grind* – always dodging – never facing *anything* head on. Just dancing around his problems until they sorted themselves out.

The charade continued mercilessly – just like always. It was *annoying*. Especially since Bakugo knew he was so much better than this. If he could just use his *real* power – he'd blow Deku away; he'd never stand a chance.

But then why did he get his licence, without even taking the exam that Bakugo fell short on?

He let out a cry of frustration, spinning around to punch him right in the side of his damaged face – flashes of it disintegrating before his eyes came to the forefront of his mind. But they were quickly dispersed when Deku grabbed his flying fist. In a movement that Mr Aizawa had most *certainly* not cared to teach them yet, small, weak, *pitiful* Deku tossed Bakugo right over his shoulder.

He collided with the floor; the mat providing zero comfort as the wind was knocked out of him in a painful blow.

The entire class stopped and stared.

Bakugo was blinking at the ceiling again – the shock barely registering.

“Alright,” Mr Aizawa’s voice cut through the tension, as thick and heavy as Bakugo’s thoughts. “Class is over – leave the mats where they are, class B will be using them in a few minutes.”

Bakugo gritted his teeth again as he hauled himself up to a sitting position. His eyes zeroed in on Deku – standing over him and looking down, his hand held out to him.

There was only one thing Bakugo could say, forcing the words past the rising lump in his throat, “Back the freak off – *I don’t need your help.”*

He was stronger than this – he was stronger than *him*.

So, why did everything seem to prove him wrong?

“Get changed quickly,” Mr Aizawa insisted, handing the bird over to Deku, “Midnight has complained to me too many times about you lot being late for her class after hero lessons.”

Bakugo stood up, averting his gaze from everyone else’s as he shoved his hands in his pockets, marching out of the hall and back towards school. He intended to finish changing first – in an attempt to finish this day as quickly as possible. However, that didn’t seem to work out, because, now at the door to class 1-A, everyone else was already

sitting inside, paying just as much attention as usual to Ms Midnight's lesson.

As soon as she saw Bakugo arriving, she pulled out the whip that came with her hero costume and pointed it menacingly in his direction, "Everyone *else* got here on time!" she exclaimed in clear frustration.

Bakugo didn't bother saying anything in reply as he weaved through the desks towards his own. His footsteps echoed in his ears, the world slowing, as he caught Deku's gaze.

For a moment, he was back in middle school, passing Deku's desk as he wandered towards his. The boy would avert his eyes immediately, slouching and ducking his head, burying it in a book.

But at UA – things were different. Deku held his stare – green eyes more piercing than he ever thought they could be. He did not slouch – he did not quiver in fear nor duck his head. Bakugo could still feel his eyes on him as he sat down in the desk in front of him, digging into the back of his head. They remained like that for the rest of the day. At least, it felt like they did. For all Bakugo knew, he'd stopped as soon as Bakugo sat down. But it didn't *feel* like that.

Art came and went, and maths did too, not long after. As soon as they finished, Bakugo shoved his things into his bag, slung it over his shoulder, and stormed out of the classroom. As he walked to the dorms, Weird Hair caught up with him.

"Hey – man – you ok?" he panted, clearly having run to reach him.

But Bakugo didn't reply. His didn't even *look* at Kirishima, and just kept moving forwards.

"You've been acting weird all afternoon," Kirishima continued, not taking the hint that Bakugo would rather *not* be talking at the moment. "Ever since your spar with Canary."

Stupid *Canary* – what a weird name. Why does *everyone* call him that?

"Look, a lot of stuff happened, and Canary hasn't been doing too great either," said Kirishima. "It's alright for you to not be either – you don't have to act like everything's ok. You know, it's not a sign of weakness. The strongest of them all are the ones that have the will to admit that they're not ok."

“Everything’s fine, ok?!” Bakugo snapped as they reached the doors to Height’s Alliance.

Kirishima hesitated behind him, holding the straps of his backpack uncertainly. “Well, if you ever need to talk –”

“I don’t; get off my back,” he snarled; kicked off his shoes and stormed up to his room.

He got changed quickly, not caring where he threw his crumpled uniform.

Then, with little debate, he fell onto his bed, muffling his face in his pillows to block out the evening light. Eventually he rolled over and found himself staring at the… ceiling.

Why was he like this? Why did someone as weak as Deku manage to pull ahead of him, despite having gone through *everything* Bakugo had – and worse?

Why?

And how could he *put it right?*

Midoriya’s mum teared up as soon as she saw him at the gates to UA.

Siren seemed just as pleased to see her as Midoriya was, announcing her presence to the world *very* loudly whilst she claimed her space upon Midoriya’s head as he hugged his tearful mother.

“Oh, Izuku!” she exclaimed. “I’m sorry about yesterday – I would have talked with you about your provisional licence over the phone but we both know why that wouldn’t have been possible and it all happened so quickly and I –”

Midoriya just laughed – there was so much going on all of a sudden.

Siren was still yelling, his mother was mumbling as bad as he apparently did and Mr Aizawa was just standing aside indifferently, holding Eri by the hand as she blinked at the reunion in apparent confusion.

“W-What?” Inko stammered, dabbing her eyes with the hanky she pulled from her cardigan’s pocket.

“Due to the situation, we’d rather we didn’t have your son wandering the streets so soon after getting his licence,” Mr Aizawa explained. “Which is why you’ve been allowed access to the school for a few hours to talk about it all.”

“T-Thank you,” Midoriya’s mum replied. “I’m sorry I wasn’t very h-helpful over the phone yesterday,” she repeated.

“It’s understandable,” Mr Aizawa shrugged. “Your son was attacked by one of the villains who took him to begin with. Granted, he dealt with it extremely well.”

His explanation was quickly interrupted by Inko blowing her nose very loudly. By which point, she had finally noticed Eri, who gazed up at her with wondering eyes. “Hello there,” Inko sniffed, crouching down to her height. “I-Is this your daughter?”

Mr Aizawa stiffened at the suggestion, which made Midoriya hold back another laugh. “No, this is Eri. She is the little girl who Midoriya saved when he escaped from the villains.”

And now she was welling up again, “H-Hi,” she stammered gazing at Eri with a wobbly smile upon her face.

“We need to have a talk with the police about her Quirk,” Mr Aizawa explained, looking at Midoriya as he did so – making it clear who he was speaking to. “I’ll be taking her back to Heights Alliance afterwards whilst I go on my hero patrol.”

Midoriya nodded in understanding. Eri felt most comfortable around Midoriya than anyone else. Apparently, she asked for him often – preferring his presence to Mr Aizawa’s or any of the other teachers.

“You can wander around the school or take your mother back to the dorms,” Mr Aizawa explained, handing the visitors pass over to Inko as he said so. “Mrs Midoriya, your pass lasts until six o’clock.”

“Thank you,” she said again, sniffing loudly as she crumpled up the

hanky and shoved it back in her pocket.

And so, they waved goodbye, Eri a little reluctantly, and Midoriya led his mother on a round-about tour of the school.

They walked in silence for a good majority of their time together, arm in arm, gazing at the world around them. They were used to that; Midoriya very often would just sit with his mother, neither uttering a word, but taking relish in each other's company. But something had clearly been weighing on her mind, and soon spilled out into the open.

"That girl… Eri – where did you… *how* did you find her?"

Midoriya pulled his hand away from hers, [*She ran into me*] he started, unsure how to phrase all this in the best way possible for his mother, [*The day before hadn't been great. I had met a horrible villain, and it was him that Eri was running from. Whilst the villains were fighting amongst each other, I took her and ran*]

Inko whimpered and hugged him tightly once more. She was a lot shorter than him now, he noticed. Siren had, at some point, transferred from his head to his mum's, so, how he was staring at her whilst his mum embraced him. She let out a quick chirp of acknowledgment as Inko pulled away again.

"You're so brave," she whispered, rubbing her eyes as they finally approached Heights Alliance. "I'm so, so sorry, Izuku."

[*There's nothing to be sorry about, Mum*] but he didn't think she saw the sign through her blurry vision.

"I don't like you being here," she admitted, "I don't like you having a provisional hero licence o-or being a hero at *all*; I just want you to be safe… But little Eri… she wouldn't be safe without you. You *saved* her… and Izuku – I'm so *proud* of you!"

Midoriya's hand was hovering above the doorknob to Heights Alliance – and now he was going to *cry*.

"Oh, hey, Mrs Midoriya," that was Shinso, who must have seen the two of them from the window and opened the door before Midoriya could burst into tears. "Nice to see you."

"You too, Shinso!" Inko replied, giving him a hug despite his usual awkwardness about it. He also got a sudden face-full of Siren.

“There’s a bird on your head,” he acknowledged, not noticing Midoriya furiously rubbing his eyes.

“Oh, is there really?” she asked, trying to peer up at Siren. “How did she get there? She can’t fly!”

Midoriya shrugged as he took her back. You just had to accept it when it came to Siren.

“Are you coming in?” Shinso questioned.

She seemed hesitant, “Oh, for a minute or so then!”

He pushed the door open a little wider and hurried ahead of the two of them, back inside, “Guys? Midoriya’s mum’s here.”

“Mamadoriya!” Uraraka exclaimed from across the common area. She leapt to her feet and ran over whilst Midoriya took off his shoes. “Hi, I’m Uraraka – Dove, on the radio!”

“So good to meet you,” she smiled, gazing around at all the people in her son’s new class.

“This is Iida – he’s Crane!” Uraraka continued.

“And I still do not see how that name relates to me!” he exclaimed, chopping his hands through the air in frustration.

“And Todoroki over there is Puffin!”

“Uraraka came up with all the names,” Shinso whispered to Midoriya’s mum, causing her to chuckle as the bubbly girl continued to bounce around the room.

“This is Jiro – she’s Owl!”

Jiro waved, glancing up from her books as Inko said, “You have a lovely voice, I heard you on the radio.”

She blushed furiously as Midoriya and Shinso stifled their laughter in the background, she shot them a look.

“You have such good friends, Izuku,” Inko whispered to him whilst Uraraka continued to enthusiastically introduce her to absolutely *everyone*, bird names or no – until.

“And then… this is Bakugo!”

From behind his mum, Midoriya gave Uraraka a look.

No – no – no – no –

“Oh! Hello, Katsuki!”

Everyone stared.

Kacchan didn’t look up from his phone as he replied, “Hey, Auntie Inko.”

Midoriya’s expression must have been a sight to behold, because Shinso snorted and Jiro was trying so hard not to laugh that she was shaking in her seat, her face hidden in her maths book.

“Oh, I haven’t seen you in *ages!* You and Izuku didn’t talk very much in middle school! Nice to see you again.”

“…mmhm,” was all Kacchan said in reply.

Well, one of the only benefits of not being able to talk, is the excuse to *not involve yourself*. Then again, Kacchan could *really* have given that interaction a *little* more effort.

When he finally glanced in Midoriya’s direction, he gave him a rather frustrated gesture, as if to say *seriously; are you kidding me?*

Midoriya quickly dropped the look as his mother turned around again – resorting to his usual, happy smile as Inko wandered back towards him.

“I-I should get going now, Izuku – I don’t want to intrude any longer. But you have to actually *message me* w-when… when these things happen again!” she insisted.

Midoriya nodded frantically, his eyes vaguely keeping an eye on Kacchan, when he casually gave him the middle finger.

The gesture was hidden again when Inko turned around to wave goodbye, and the only reason that the childish, silent argument ended there and then, was because Midoriya had to hurriedly pull his shoes back on to accompany Inko back to the UA gates.

Midoriya was still considering how everyone would have reacted if he returned the gesture to Kacchan – not that he ever would… but still.

“You really do have such nice friends,” Inko sniffed as they reached

the main entrance to the school. “And it’s so nice to see you and Katsuki getting along again!”

He forced a smile, although she didn’t realise how fake it was. Although, it was harder to tell when his mask covered it up.

“I’ll see you again soon, Izuku,” she said after one last hug. “And *please* – try not to get into anymore trouble! My heart can’t *take* it anymore.”

Midoriya nodded sincerely, and with a final wave, the two parted ways, and Midoriya hurried all the way back to Height’s Alliance.

“– just give him a break!” was the sound that Midoriya heard as he hesitated by the door. He pressed his ear against it as carefully and quietly as he could – two of his class *did* have super-human hearing, after all.

“I didn’t freaking *do* anything!” Kacchan’s voice exclaimed in response.

“His *mother* was here and you were swearing at him over her shoulder!” Shinso yelled. Oh dear – this wouldn’t end well.

Midoriya decided that hanging around behind the closed door wouldn’t do much, so he cautiously opened it. The others were all around the corner. He tossed off his shoes as the arguing continued and then wandered cautiously towards them.

“*Auntie Inko?”* Jiro scoffed. “I know you two were childhood friends – but come on.”

“To be fair, didn’t Canary once call you Kacchan?” questioned Kirishima. “And you call him… what was it – Deku?”

“It’s kind of sweet!” added Mina with a giggle.

“The name Deku means useless,” Shinso interjected harshly.

“…Oh yeah, I forgot,” Mina mumbled.

She *forgot?* Midoriya frowned, still slightly out of sight. Why did she *forget* – surely she didn’t know about this before? The only one who knew about that was Shinso…

“We should stop arguing about him when he’s not here, ribbit,” Asui pointed out. “It goes wrong every time.”

Midoriya narrowed his eyes – this had happened *before?*

He took this moment to come into view.

“Oh! There you are!” Uraraka exclaimed once she saw him, cutting the conversation short.

But the bewildered expression was still on Midoriya’s face. He glanced between all of them, reading the awkward looks on their own.

[*Raven, what were you talking about?*] Midoriya signed to Shinso uncertainly.

“Just Bakugo being *Bakugo.”*

“Oh, *shut up,”* he hissed.

[*That’s not what I meant*] Midoriya continued, stepping a little closer. He caught Koda’s eye as he signed, aware that he understood the movements too. [*What did you tell them whilst I was gone?*]

“Today?” Shinso frowned, “Like I said, we were just talking about –”

“Me,” Midoriya glared. It wasn’t just the noise that made everyone flinch, but the venomous look in his bright green eyes. [*What happened whilst I was with the villains?*]

“When you were… with the villains…” he repeated slowly.

There was a moment of silence between them all, before Kacchan butted in, “He spilt all the rubbish about *me* that you said to *him!”* he snarled. “On the first night in the dorms – a *brilliant* start.”

Midoriya stared at Shinso in disbelief. He’d told him those things in *confidence* – did he *really* spill some of his deepest, darkest secrets to the entire class?

“I-I – I lost my cool, ok?!” Shinso stammered, [*You weren’t there, he was being an utter* –]

[*Does Tired know?*]

“Mr Aizawa…? No – no one knows outside of 1-A. Midoriya, it’s not that bad; it’s ok –”

“Canary, he just wanted to help!” Kirishima stepped in. “We understand – and we won’t talk about it ever again if you don’t want

us to – we get it, it's totally not manly; we're sorry."

Midoriya… wasn't sure how he felt. Yeah, it wasn't necessarily a bad thing that everyone knew – at least not for him – but it was for Kacchan. Midoriya didn't want Kacchan's past to compromise his future. He would make a great hero, despite what he used to be; despite… not passing the provisional licencing exam… despite… everything…

[*Tired is bringing Bluebird up later*] Midoriya signed, hanging his head. [*Tell her I'll be in my room*]

"Wait, Midoriya!" Shinso called out, but Midoriya didn't reply, fiddling with his hands absentmindedly as he walked up the stairs to his room, ignoring the calls behind him.

"You really do have such nice friends. And it's so nice to see you and Katsuki getting along again!"

Yeah – if only.

Chapter End Notes

You have *no idea* how happy it makes me that there's so much art from you guys, it's just so cool!

First up is **thefishysalmon** on Tumblr! They've done a beautiful doodle titled "How can he sing an escape song if he can't sing?" – which is a weirdly popular theme for fanart as it seems XD

Thelovypop17's here with a digital drawing of Midoriya and Siren!

FiveInBinaryOr101 has doodled some Sirens with *fabulous* hairstyles XD

And finally, littlemusic…meiyou has finished their collection of the Aria with a drawing of Crane!

Next up – *chapter 42*.

Will I give it a cliff-hanger or will I make it just one chapter…? I don't know – I guess we'll all just have to wait and see!

A Blessing in Disguise

Chapter Notes

Hi! Remember how I said I would be mixing up the events of season 3 and 4 a bit? Well, we've reached that point again, and the anime did *not* get as far as it needed to in order to remove all manga spoilers from this story! Thus, I must confess, the following chapter contains spoilers for late season 4 of the anime. However, they aren't particularly big or important in the real story; it's just amplified *to* be important in *this* story. It's all explained in the chapter and you don't need to read the manga to be able to understand what on Earth's going on.

And yes –

– I managed to avoid a cliff hanger in this chapter

* bows *

I know, I know – impressive – no I don't need a round of applause – * claps hands in a circle *

But seriously though, you can tell by the scroll bar that this is a *really* long chapter. You might want to find somewhere comfortable and settle down because this is going to be a bumpy ride - and a long one.

Does this mean there will be no more cliff-hangers in Canary?

…yeah, I can't promise you that. I mean, I promised there would be only 40 chapters but *here we are* on chapter *42* with a good chunk of the story to go…

Anyways, hanging around here's not going to speed *anything* up – back to Canary!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

9 days since the return

Was Canary taking this thing with Bakugo and Shinso a little too far? Jiro wasn't sure – and it didn't seem like Canary was either.

He was blatantly ignoring everyone; isolating himself; refusing to eat alongside anyone; studying in silence; not talking to –

Actually, well, that wasn't that much different from normal, come to think of it.

The *main* difference was him not really communicating with Shinso. Jiro had spied him signing with Koda that morning, but nothing more.

Maybe Jiro was over thinking it. Maybe he just needed a little time to consider all this. Jiro didn't really see… what he was freaking out about though? Not at first at least. But she could barely remember what Shinso had spilled. A little thought reminded her of one particular comment, lodged in her mind:

"– That he thought he'd never amount to anything and that he was the worthless, useless Deku that you made him out to be! You were the one who told him to go and commit suicide!"

But… what happened, *really?* Did Canary actually…?

No, Jiro didn't want to think about it – not at all.

Canary wasn't here right now. He was with Eri, according to Iida. Apparently, after she came back from her Quirk evaluation of sorts with the police, things weren't all as good as they should have been. As soon as the little girl scampered into Height's Alliance, she immediately ran up to Yaoyorozu, and asked for Canary. He carried her back down the stairs, about an hour later, her face red from tears, as he hummed a familiar tune – one that Jiro couldn't quite place – in the girl's ear, to hand her back over to Mr Aizawa, despite how displeased she seemed by the idea. So now, with her still being rather distraught after last night, Canary was spending this morning with

her. He would be missing maths, but really, Jiro didn't think it mattered that *Canary* of all people missed *one* maths lesson.

Speaking of which, Jiro should really get going. Homeroom class was in ten minutes and it was safer to be early than facing Iida's wrath when she's almost *not* early.

She was just listening to her music, ambling along towards the school, when the tunes started to fade out. She groaned when she realised this was the tell-tale act of an in-coming phone call.

"Hello?" she answered groggily as she continued to walk, hoping she wouldn't lose signal. Or maybe hoping that she *would* if it was just a spam caller.

"Hey, Owl! It's me!"

Jiro frowned and stopped in her tracks, "A-Aozora?"

"*That's the one!"*

"Um, why are you –"

"Let me get straight to the point. Did you listen to the radio last night?"

"Err… Honestly? No…"

"Exactly!"

"Wait, what?" Jiro questioned staring up at the sky in confusion. "What does that mean for *anything?"*

"*You're not the only one not listening, my dear friend!"* Aozora continued. The distinct sound of rustling paper indicated that she was still in her office.

"Um, it's like, 8:15 in the morning – why are you *calling* me?"

"*To fix this problem, Owl!"* Aozora laughed, like it was obvious. "*Why do you think we've got such a decrease in listeners? What has happened that could have possibly resulted in this?!"*

Jiro continued walking, a little slower this time, as she spoke, "Well, Canary's not on the show anymore."

"*Yes!"* exclaimed Aozora. *"Now they've realised that Canary won't be on the show for the foreseeable future, they're not going out of their way to*

listen!"

"Aren't you just back to your listener count *before* Canary appeared then?" Jiro acknowledged.

"*No, a little above that. We seem to have gained some permanent listeners – but we've lost so many! We were doing so well and now that growth is* over! *And I'm here to fix that."*

"With… me?"

"Oh yeah – with you. *When you and Raven came on the show just over a week ago, we had a spike in listener count. It's younger people, you see! They want to hear what life is like for heroes their age – the people who will be the heroes of their generation! Plus, you sing, and your singing is like,* awesome."

Jiro blushed terribly, which must have caught a few glances now that she was walking through the main building of UA, up to her classroom. "U-Um… thanks?"

"So, yeah – I thought I'd call you now whilst I remember and I'm pretty sure you're not in lessons yet. I haven't taken you out of classes, right? Because Present Mic would kill me."

"No, no! I-I'm just walking to registration – but Aozora –"

"*Oh, good! Anyways, the idea came to me yesterday when I realised how much the Thursday shows suck without any of the Aria on. Tuesdays, we can deal with – but Thursdays were always an issue before Canary showed up. So, here's the deal – you will be coming on instead of Canary in that Thursday slot, dragging along another one of your friends maybe every other week to spice things up and stuff. Of course, it would be incredibly useful for publicising yourself in preparation for your heroic future – you'd be a big name by the time you debut. We wouldn't call it Canary's Hour or Owl's Hour or anything like that. I don't know about an official name; we'd have to wait and see. And we might also do a couple of trail weeks with you instead of hiring you straight away just to see what happens before making a big commitment – you know, business and all that – but when we did it with Canary it was a gamble worth making. We've been able to reach so many more people with the money from –"*

"Wait, wait, wait – Aozora, *stop,"* Jiro sighed, coming to a stop herself right outside the door to class 1-A, and now pacing back and forth in front of it. "I-I feel like I'm kind of just replacing Canary here…"

On the other end of the phone, Aozora mimicked Jiro's sigh, "*Well, I can't say that you're wrong. But think of the bigger picture here. The money we earn from merchandising and advertising and all that goes towards helping other people. When the radio show is more popular, the White Noise team has more callers and they save more people. This isn't some big popularity contest, it's a serious work. We may not be the most well-known hero division out there, but we do our part and make the lives of so many people so much better. If you can fill this gap on the radio, the statistics say that our listener count will go up again and more people can be reached. Moreover, Canary won't be like this forever, give time, and he will heal – then he can join you on the radio again! Maybe he can even have a permanent job here, considering he can't be a hero anymore.*"

Jiro hesitated, "Um… Did you not hear?"

"*…Hear what?*"

"Err… I'm not sure if I'm supposed to tell you this – so don't tell anyone else!"

"*Oh, I promise – gimme those details!*"

Jiro glanced around as if checking that no one could overhear, and she whispered into her phone's receiver, "Canary got a provisional hero licence."

There was a moment of silence on the other end. "*…wHAT??!*"

"I *know.*"

"*HOW THE HELL DID THAT HAPPEN?!*"

"I-I'll tell you later! I have homeroom right now!" Jiro exclaimed checking the time on her phone, only to realise that Iida was about to get pretty mad at her.

"*You better call me with an explanation and ALL THE DETAILS I will be WAITING!*"

"I will, I promise!" Jiro laughed. "See you in like… eight hours."

"*You expect me to sit here and wait for EIGHT HOURS?!*"

"See you then!"

"*Well then I BETTER HAVE AN ANSWER BY THEN OWL; I NEED –*"

And so, Jiro hung up. Mainly because Mr Aizawa had just appeared at the end of the corridor. Jiro quickly pocketed her phone and slid into class 1-A.

“Jiro!” Iida called out – as expected, “You’re almost –”

“Late, yeah, yeah, I know,” Jiro smiled, unable to hide the grin on her face as she sat down. However, it quickly faded when she caught sight of Shinso, staring glumly at the empty seat in front of him, where Canary should have been.

Oh, right – *Canary*. How would *he* feel about Jiro taking his place at the radio…? That show had changed his life – he loved it. They were all on thin ice already in terms of friendships. Would they be able to keep them at all if Jiro swooped in and took something so dear to Canary?

“Morning class,” mumbled Mr Aizawa as he stumbled into view.

There was a returning chorus of, “*Good morning, Mr Aizawa,”* before the register began. Jiro wasn’t the only one who tensed slightly at the thought of Canary again, when his name was called out. The whole class dynamic was really messed up because of everything that had happened… and Jiro was just about to make it *worse* with the radio thing… She thought everything was getting better now that he had his hero licence, but it had just raised more uncertainties.

“The school has something for you to start thinking about now,” their teacher explained after registration was over, and he jotted down Canary’s excuse of absence. “You have a decent amount of time to plan and sort it out – and the venue is available to start setting everything up in about a month’s time.”

He blinked at his class, noting the worried expressions on their faces, including Jiro’s. That was when he must have realised he hadn’t actually detailed what he was on about.

“Oh, the Culture Festival is coming up.”

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief – it was just an ordinary school thing; not at all like the chaos UA’s version of a *Sports Festival* brought with it. Here, each and every class would put on their own little event. It was less of a festival for the hero course and designed more to play into the hands of the business course and the support course. The support students could show off their creations to potential investors, whilst business students could work on their entrepreneur skills, either

working alongside the support course, or setting up their own stalls. For the hero course and general studies, however, it was just a time for them to have a little fun.

Trust Iida to make it anything but.

“We should decide on a theme now in order to optimise the time we have to prepare and perfect it!” he insisted loudly, now standing before the class with Yaoyorozu by his side, whilst Mr Aizawa slid into his yellow sleeping bag indifferently.

The class representatives started going around the room to ask for suggestions – and most were *pretty* unlikely, Bakugo suggestion of a *deathmatch* for example. Iida and Yaoyorozu themselves weren’t much help either, considering most of them chose rather… *studious* options.

Jiro’s mind, however, was in a different place. She felt *tremendously* guilty taking Canary’s spot on the radio station… but… oh – it would be so amazing! Singing on the radio every Thursday evening? It was like a dream come true! Something she would *fantasise* about as a little girl, becoming a hero and a musician all at once! She would get even more followers than before, but this time, it would be *Earphone Jack* – or maybe just Jack as a nickname! It wouldn’t just be because she was one of Canary’s friends and was occasionally a guest or co-host that was brought in, she would *actually* be a staring member of the cast! *Ahh!* Just *imagine* what it would be like when –

“What about you, Jiro?” Iida called out, realising she was the only one who hadn’t suggested something yet, apart from Canary of course, who wasn’t there.

“Umm…” she replied, realising that she had been daydreaming this whole time and hadn’t actually considered what would be a good plan for this Culture Festival thing. “Err… open mic comedy?” she suggested unsurely. Not that she would actually want to do that – but the word *mic* was on her mind, and that was simply what followed.

However, the suggestion was quickly ditched as Iida and Yaoyorozu went through their collected ideas. None of them really seemed to fit what they wanted, and they were quickly running out of time.

Before long, Mr Aizawa emerged from his cocoon-like sleeping bag and announced that they were indeed, out of time. Mr Ectoplasm had arrived for their morning mathematics lesson and they *still* hadn’t come up with anything suitable.

“You have a week to come up with an idea,” Mr Aizawa explained as he slowly trudged away. “The quicker you come up with one, the more time you have to prepare. Fail to do any of that though… and we’ll be doing a *regular class open house.”*

No one seemed particularly keen on that idea.

Jiro wondered what *Canary* would have suggested…

“Hey! If it isn’t my favourite student!”

Midoriya blinked up from the puzzle he was helping Eri complete to see Present Mic, bursting in through the door.

Eri pointed at him, “Cockatoo.”

A moment of stunned silence passed until Present Mic burst out in laughter. “How did you teach her that without being able to speak?!” he exclaimed, pointing accusingly at Midoriya.

He looked down at the puzzle, and carefully placed the piece he was holding right into the middle of the picture – which was a life-sized rendition of, yes, a *cockatoo.*

“You have the hair,” Eri sniffed, pointing up at Present Mic’s outrageous hairdo, and then back to the iconic fluff of the bird in her puzzle.

Present Mic looked like he was going to well up, now that both his children had separately come to the same conclusion of him being a cockatoo.

[*Does she have a bird name?*] Present Mic signed eagerly to Midoriya.

[*Bluebird*]

“Did your friend Uraraka come up with that one too?”

Midoriya shook his head and pointed to himself.

Present Mic laughed to himself softly as he pulled up another chair to the table that Eri and Midoriya were sitting at. They were in the staff

room, which was rather empty at this time of day, considering most of the teachers were busy teaching lessons. Midoriya was *pretty* sure Present Mic should have been hosting a class at this point as well, but he decided not to point it out.

"So, little listener," Present Mic began after clearing his throat. Both were watching Eri quietly mull over which piece of puzzle would slot in this tantalisingly empty gap near the cockatoo's head. "How's the hero course going?"

[*Fine*] Midoriya signed back simply, passing Eri another piece from the pile of unused pieces that she couldn't quite reach herself.

"Just fine? You've had your first hero lessons now, right?! Were they great or what?!"

Midoriya just shrugged, straightening the corner pieces a little and not meeting the hero's gaze.

"Something happened, huh?" he quickly concluded. "Is it… friendship troubles?"

The slight stiffening of Midoriya's shoulders must have been what gave it away.

"Well, you've always got Shinso! You too have been like… birds of a feather – since the start of the year!"

Midoriya sighed deeply and turned to Present Mic was a look in his eyes that most likely explained everything.

Present Mic stared over the top of his glasses back at him, "Your friendship troubles are with *Shinso?"*

Dejectedly, Midoriya nodded.

"*How?"* his teacher exclaimed, catching the attention of Eri for a moment, before she returned to her puzzle, which was clearly far more interesting. "How can you have an argument without even speaking – wait, was this in sign language? Does anyone else know?"

[*No – that's the problem!*]

"No one knowing is the problem?"

[*No, everyone knows everything! That's the problem… When I was gone, Raven got mad at Explosion and he said some stuff about me that I really*

didn't want anyone else knowing yet]

"And I'm guessing *Explosion* is… Bakugo?"

He nodded, slotting another puzzle piece into place for Eri.

"Ok… is there some history between you and Bakugo then?"

He felt his shoulders tense again.

"It's ok – you don't have to explain," Present Mic added hurriedly. "But if you wanted to talk about it, I'm all ears!"

Midoriya wavered, looking up at his teacher unsurely. He sighed, [*I just don't know all of class A as much as they know me, and I find it unsettling. Maybe it's a good thing that they know everything that happened, but I wasn't ready for that yet. I understand that Raven lost his cool. I get it that they thought I was dead. But… they were still secrets that I didn't want anyone else knowing. It's not fair on me – or Explosion*]

Present Mic didn't reply for a moment, and instead passed Eri another piece to complete the picture before them.

"Can I learn the secret hand language?" she asked suddenly.

Present Mic beamed, "Well, you've got the two best teachers you could ask for! What do you want to know?!"

Midoriya lost the entirety of his maths lesson to teaching Eri sign language, and then all of RE too. The class would have been well into their Japanese lesson by the time Mr Aizawa walked over to tell Midoriya he should probably head back to class 1-A now. He'd arrived hours ago, but just decided not to disturb them. Midoriya was also quite sure that Midnight had been taking pictures of him from across the room. He wouldn't be too surprised if they ended up in Aozora's possession.

Present Mic ended up walking him back to class, mainly because Midoriya had the sneaking suspicion he had wanted to talk to him about something this entire time.

"So, do you remember much about what our wonderful Principle Nedzu said in the start of term assembly not that long ago?!" Present Mic began as soon as they'd left the staff room.

Midoriya gave him a look.

“Well, yes, he does tend to go on a bit… *Anyways* – have any of your classmates started *work studies* this term yet?”

Midoriya frowned, yeah he remembered the term *work studies* being thrown around in that assembly, but he didn’t ask about it further. Mr Aizawa said that they might have some third-year students come in and talk about them later that week.

“*Well*, I thought I’d jump the gun a bit – blame Aozora! She said it was only fair that you’d be offered another opportunity after – ah wait, you’re not really… talking to your friends at the moment, are you?”

Midoriya’s confusion simply intensified.

Present Mic cleared his throat awkwardly. “ANYWAY! Work studies can only be held at a place with a good track record, preferably where you did your internship! And there’s no better place for you than *my* place to do that! You need the practise to catch up with your classmates anyway!”

Midoriya blinked, [*Wait, are you offering me a work study?!*]

“YEAH! No radio show stuff I’m afraid – that unfortunately kind of revolves around speaking. But the *White Noise* team would have a place for you! Static said he was happy to have you around! I was going to offer it to Shinso too, but maybe just you for now then.”

Midoriya wavered, trying to mull the offer over in his mind, he hadn’t really explained it well. But, well, a hero without a Quirk wouldn’t get an opportunity much better than this elsewhere!

[*Are you really sure?!*]

“I wouldn’t be offering it if I weren’t!”

Midoriya *beamed.*

“Come on, high five, little co-host! Just because you can’t sing, doesn’t mean you can’t fly!”

And so, Midoriya threw himself into a hug outside the grand door to class 1-A.

Present Mic huffed as he hugged him back, “Am I ever going to actually get a high five when I ask for one?”

Damnit, Midoriya still wouldn't talk to him.

Shinso ground his teeth in frustration, staring at his English work. The foreign words moved around before his eyes. He tore his gaze away from them, resting it on the back of Midoriya's head instead. Siren was nestled amongst his hair. Mr Aizawa was taking her to the vets that evening to remove her bandages. Shinso wasn't sure if he was looking forward to having that rocket on the loose again, especially when he was on Midoriya's bad side, if he had one at all, because that most likely translated to Siren's bad side, and that was something she most definitely had. That look in her beady black eyes seemed to confirm it. She must have sensed that Midoriya wasn't too happy with Shinso, because she was currently *staring* at him from Midoriya's green head of hair, a hint of *vengeance* in that look of hers.

Shinso could almost hear her thoughts:

You make my human sad. You're next.

Yeah, there was definitely something wrong with that bird.

"Favourite student!" Present Mic called out.

Midoriya perked up, because there was no denying Present Mic's favouritism at this point.

"Collect in the papers would you? The spelling quiz is *over!"*

If Shinso and Midoriya hadn't been on bad terms, Shinso probably would have gotten up ahead of him to pick up the papers, babbling on about being the favourite whilst Midoriya stifled his laughter in the corner.

Back in reality, Shinso blinked down at his work. Ah, *shoot* – he'd hardly answered anything. Wait – he knew that one!

But as he put his pen back down on his paper, Midoriya snatched it out from underneath him without a second glance in his direction.

"Hey!" Shinso called back at him.

Midoriya ignored him and the ugly blue line of ink that Shinso's pen left behind as he pulled the quiz away.

As he collected in the rest of the tests, everyone stewed in their own thoughts.

Shinso didn't know what to *do*. *Was* there a way to make it up to him? He'd *never* considered something like this would happen as a result of trying to get back at Bakugo. And honestly, was Midoriya taking this a little too far? Shinso understood why he was mad, and if he were in that situation, maybe he would have been too, but what was this *pettiness* really achieving? If not making everything *worse* for everyone.

The rest of the day passed by quickly. Shinso hadn't seen Midoriya at all during lunch. He'd appeared mid-morning, part way through Japanese, vanished immediately after art, only to turn up again later for afternoon registration and then the rest of the day's lessons. Shinso was planning on *trying* to talk to Midoriya when the day ended, but as soon as it did, he chucked his things into his bag and stormed off. Shinso reckoned he was really using Eri as an excuse to exclude himself at this point.

Now, they were back in the dorms. The sun was starting to set, and Iida and Yaoyorozu had decided that they should really get this Culture Festival thing over and done with now. Yaoyorozu had made one of those massive sheets of paper, and had recreated a large list of ideas, most of which they'd composed earlier in homeroom, but quite a few new ones had been added since then.

"– Now I don't think any of the food ideas would work," she continued, gazing at the list thoughtfully. "Everything would be compared to Lunch Rush's food."

"Yeah, sorry, Sato – but even you can't measure up to Lunch Rush quite yet," Sero added with no remorse.

"And, if it's ok with everyone else, I think we should cross out the haunted house as well," said Iida.

"Oh, but *why?!"* Hagakure pouted, who was the one who had suggested the idea.

"Because the last time that we participated in a test of courage of sorts, it did not end the way we had hoped."

Silence fell over the room, and a few glanced awkwardly towards Bakugo, who didn't seem that bothered anyway.

"I'd hate to bring up bad memories for some of our party," Iida explained awkwardly.

"I'd like to scare the hell out of class B," Bakugo interjected confidently, "Never got the chance."

"It wasn't you who I was referring to, Bakugo," Iida replied.

The others glanced around the room, in search for the person that their class representative was *actually* talking about.

"Hey, where is Midoriya anyway?" questioned Kirishima with a frown.

"With Eri," Shinso quickly answered with a tone as bitter as his coffee.

No one talked for a few moments afterwards, all deep in their own thoughts about Midoriya.

"Is… Is there any way we can make it up to him?" voiced Uraraka, who was clearly thinking along the same lines as Shinso. But Shinso had really had enough by this point.

"It's clear that he doesn't *want* us to make it up to him and that's fine by me," he lied, taking a sip of his drink to distract himself with the taste.

"I think there's just a lot of stuff going on for him at the moment," Iida interjected, ignoring Shinso's comment. "He needs some time to think it all over and… assert his place in our class!"

There were a lot of things Shinso could have said to that. He decided not to say anything at all in the end.

"He's probably pretty stressed," Tsuyu acknowledged, tapping her finger against her lip, like she always did when she was about to bring up a well thought out point. "It's been nine days since he came back, and he's already got his hero licence and has been thrown right into class with the rest of us. He's trying to look after Eri and make sure his mother's ok – understand, like you said, his place in our group – and he's got a surgery for his mouth in a few days now, ribbit. It must be really hard."

"How long has he had that injury now?" Mina wondered aloud,

sinking into the sofa as she snuggled into her jacket. “A month or so?”

“Twenty-two days since Kamino,” was the unexpected knowledge from Bakugo. Well, perhaps it should have been expected. That was when *he* was rescued.

“Not quite a month then,” said Todoroki, “but that’s still a long time.”

“It must be really sad,” Uraraka continued, “for someone with a singing Quirk to not be able to sing…”

Silence fell over them again. Why did their conversations *always* boomerang back to Midoriya?

But then, Jiro perked up, “Well then… why don’t *we* sing?”

“Wait, for the Culture Festival?” questioned Uraraka, sitting up a little straighter in her chair next to Tsuyu.

“Yeah, like a, um, well, a band kind of thing,” she suggested awkwardly.

Hagakure gasped loudly, her onesie was jumping up and down in the air so Shinso could only assume the the invisible girl was doing the same. “Oh! You could teach us all instruments! You’re *such* a good teacher!”

Jiro flushed red, “W-Well, I don’t know about *everyone* – maybe just a few of us in the band itself… I-I don’t know, it was just a silly idea.”

“Wait, no!” Mina exclaimed, suddenly leaping to her feet, “What if the rest of us *danced?!”*

“Singing and dancing?” Shinso repeated with a raised eyebrow. “No thanks.”

Jiro rolled her eyes, “I can teach you the guitar rifts for whatever song we end up using.”

Shinso hesitated – well, if they were going to do this, then that was the only place he was happy slotting into. He shrugged, “Fair enough.”

“I think it’s a wonderful idea!” Iida announced eagerly. “Not only would it be a great thing for Midoriya, but it could show our support to the other departments as well! After all, it is our class which has attracted all these villain attacks and attention to the school. Because

of us, the Culture Festival has to be closed off to all but certified visitors! By having this show, we could help the other students of UA relax a little more! Being a hero isn't just about defeating the villain in the end!"

The class was buzzing with ideas surrounding their chosen event. But that was suddenly brought to a dramatic and displeasing end by, of course, *Bakugo*.

"It's not going to work," he said, his feet up on the table as he stared at the ceiling.

"Why not?" Jiro replied, putting her hands on her hips in frustration.

"Because, first of all, Deku's not going to want to see *any* of you singing and prancing around when he's straight up *ignoring you,"* he pointed out rudely.

"That's on me; no one else," Shinso replied, glaring at his now empty cup of coffee with the menace that he would have directed at Bakugo if he didn't know it would make things worse.

"Whatever," Bakugo huffed. "When it comes down to it, is reminding him of the one thing he *can't* do anymore *really* going to make him feel better?"

There was a moment of silence.

"Since when did *you* care?" was Mina's harsh interjection.

Bakugo stood up and glared at her, probably about to say something equally, if not more, harsh in response.

"Guys, can we *not?"* Kaminari sighed, "Like, seriously, all we do is *argue* recently."

"He's right," added Kirishima. "It's the last thing we all need – *especially* Canary."

"Well then…" said Iida, clearing his throat. "I think we all need to be aware of how delicate Midoriya's situation is… But first things first, are we inviting him to take part in this, as a class, to help strengthen our friendship with him again, or is this going to be a surprise?"

"I think it should be a surprise!" Mina exclaimed, jumping up again and punching the air. "I'll teach you all to dance – I used to be in the

same class as Canary! And then Jiro can head the band team!"

"Well, he'll find out about the Culture Festival eventually, and ask us what we're doing…" Asui pointed out.

"*Asking* us could prove to be an issue," Shinso huffed. They ignored him.

"Then, if he asks, we'll tell the truth – that it's a surprise for him!" Uraraka agreed, getting out of her seat as she got about as excited as Ashido, if that were possible.

Todoroki sat down next to Shinso with another cup of coffee, which he gladly accepted, "This is going to go horribly wrong," he sighed.

Todoroki just nodded, "It might not though."

"How would you know?"

"I could ask you the same question."

Shinso hesitated, and sighed, "I guess so."

"Oh! We've got to do a song in English – like what Canary does, yeah?!" suggested Hagakure eagerly.

"Something upbeat and easy to dance to!" added Mina.

They were throwing ideas left and right now. Shinso tried not to involve himself too much, mainly so he could stand back with his hands in the air when things inevitably went wrong, and he could say, well, he didn't have anything to do with it; it wasn't his fault. It probably wasn't the best motto in life, but in a situation as delicate as this, he was more than happy to take a few steps back.

They were nowhere near finished with the planning when they decided to stop there, because Shoji spotted Midoriya on his way over with Eri. All Shinso knew was that he'd somehow been lumped in the musical team with Jiro and a few others. *Bakugo* was still refusing to do anything - as helpful as always.

"Hi, Canary!" Uraraka called out when he walked in.

Yaoyorozu had already hurried upstairs to hide their planning poster and everyone had started milling around to *act natural*. Sato was absentmindedly reading a random page in a cookery book. Kaminari and Kirishima were arguing over what channel the TV should be on,

so it ended up on the news. Mina, who hadn't really caught the drift, was trying to teach Aoyama how to dance, which was rather entertaining to watch, actually.

Midoriya waved back meekly as he helped Eri take off her shoes.

She immediately hurried into the centre of the common room area, her eyes darting around in search for someone who was very clearly in the top three people she trusted in this school, "W-Where's Momo?" she questioned worriedly as she failed to locate Yaoyorozu.

"She'll be right back!" Uraraka insisted. "Want to sit with me whilst we wait?"

Eri insistently shook her head, running back over to Midoriya.

Shinso grinned at Uraraka's disappointed expression, "Favouritism," he murmured.

He glanced at Midoriya, only to realise he was signing – but not to him.

[*–with Tired. She's going to the vets and I'm looking after Bluebird whilst he's gone*] he told Koda.

He seemed a little confused, [*Sorry, I don't know what your sign names mean*]

"Tired is Mr Aizawa and Eri is Bluebird," Shinso said over his shoulder, looking away as he did so. Not that it would make a difference. Midoriya would know that he was watching him, or else he wouldn't have known what he signed.

"Why is Mr Aizawa *tired?"* scoffed Ojiro with a slight smile upon his face.

"Because he's always tired?" Shinso replied, raising an eyebrow as he did so.

"Wait, I'm confused," Kaminari frowned.

Sero laughed, "Hi confused, I'm –"

"Don't you freaking *dare."*

"They're sign names," Shinso sighed. He was vaguely aware that Midoriya was still talking, well, signing, to Koda, but he knew better

than to keep watching and intruding.

“Sign names?” repeated Todoroki in apparent bewilderment.

Shinso stared at him in surprise, “Has this seriously never come up in conversation before?”

“*No* – what are sign names?” questioned Jiro.

Shinso sighed, “You can’t say normal names in sign – there isn’t a specific sign for… Jiro or Todoroki. You can use kanji meanings, I guess – but that’s boring and sometimes a little confusing. So, you just assign random signs or words to different people, and those are sign names. What do you think the bird names are for?”

“*Wait!”* Uraraka exclaimed, “*that’s* the purpose of the bird names?!”

“Err, *yeah?”* replied Shinso, still rather shocked that they hadn’t realised this yet.

“Oh! What’s mine?!” Mina asked excitably, bounding over to him.

“I have literally never attempted saying your name in sign,” he answered blatantly.

“*Aw!”* she exclaimed in disappointment.

Uraraka was now comforting Mina by suggesting numerous bird names to her. Yaoyorozu was busy talking with Eri about the bunny hero on TV (Mirko), and the rest of the class had descended to their usual form of chaos.

That was when Shinso caught the sight of Midoriya, starting to head over towards the stairs as he shouldered his backpack again.

“Go talk to him,” insisted Todoroki, removing the cup of coffee from Shinso’s hands in an attempt to get him to go.

“Easier said than done with *Midoriya* of all people,” Shinso said, rolling his eyes.

“Yeah but, you’re at a stalemate. He won’t communicate with you and you won’t with him. It’ll spiral out of control if you don’t at least *try* and make a difference,” Todoroki explained, drinking his own coffee whilst still denying Shinso his.

“But he doesn’t *want –”*

“Just try,” he sighed. “As you said, it’s on you.”

As in, he won’t talk to *any* of us if he won’t talk to you. At least, that’s what Shinso was pretty sure Todoroki was getting at.

He sighed, glancing over at the others talking about the heroes on the news with Eri, and then left them to it, hurrying up the stairs to his floor. Midoriya, of course, had his room right next to Shinso. The door was shut, and Shinso wavered before it.

“Knock, knock,” he said out loud.

There came no reply, obviously.

“I’m going to guess you just signed *who’s there.* You’re already doing better than Stain, I’ve got to admit,” Shinso said with a slight laugh and a shrug.

Midoriya still didn’t emerge.

“The punch line is *you* punching *me,”* Shinso sighed, kicking at the ground, his hands in his pockets. “I was a jerk, I get it; I know. But… with the risk of sounding *exactly* like Bakugo – the past’s in the past. What I did was wrong, but there’s nothing I can do to change that now… I… I remember – when I lashed out – back when you were missing, Bakugo said that, during the Sports Festival, *you’d* said that, well, all my life, I’d been called a villain, whilst he was the hero – but they’d gotten it the wrong way around.”

Shinso heard him move inside his room – the clattering of a plate on his desk, well, that’s what it sounded like. Was he eating dinner? Or maybe a really late lunch or something…

He heard him come to a stop just behind the door.

“I, um,” Shinso struggled to continue, “words are hard, ok? You know that – and it all just spilled out when you weren’t here. I know – well, I don’t, because you still haven’t said *anything* about it to us – but I’m sure you were having a far worse time than us, but we were still taking it pretty hard. Bakugo had a go at me for *moping around;* it was the first night at the dorms and I’d never really spoken with him before, so I kind of… lashed out. I shouldn’t have said those things – not just for your sake, but for Bakugo’s too. He’d been going through a tough time as well and I screwed it up even more. I’m sorry.”

The door creaked open.

Midoriya wasn't wearing his mask. He had that plastic err… *plug* thing in his cheek, so he must have been eating then. Perhaps he was eating an early dinner up here rather than having to eat with the rest of them down in the common room area.

Shinso faltered, he took his hands out of his pockets, raising them as if he was about to sign something whilst he took in a breath to speak. But defeated, he let them flop to his sides as he breathed out again, "I-I'm sorry. I'm not sure what else I can say."

Midoriya didn't say anything for a moment. He just stood there, staring. A couple of seconds past, and he *actually* started to well up.

"Are you *crying?"* Shinso gaped.

"…Mo," he replied with a sniff, because he couldn't say *no* properly – that just made Shinso laugh.

Midoriya murmured something indecipherable which ended with a word that *sounded* like *funny*, so Shinso could only assume he'd said *it's not funny*.

He rubbed his eyes, but in vein, as the tears poured down his face.

"Are… you ok?" Shinso questioned hesitantly, taking a cautious step forwards as the door swung open properly.

He had his face buried in his hands as he shook his head.

"Ok – just…" Shinso grabbed Midoriya's shoulders and turned him around, stirring him back into his room to plonk him down on the bed whilst he took the discarded chair to sit opposite him. "Right – ok – did you want to talk or…"

He quickly took his hands away from his eyes, blinked furiously as him. Shinso was trying not to stare at the grey piece of plastic filling in the hole in his face.

[*What is wrong with me?*] he signed in apparent frustration; his hands shiny with tears as more streamed down his face.

"I-I –" Shinso stammered, unsure of how to reply.

[*I can't stop crying*] he explained, now sobbing hysterically, [*It won't stop*]

"Do you… want a hug?" Shinso asked, laughing unsurely.

"*Yeah,"* Midoriya whined, and so Shinso moved from the chair to the space on the bed beside him and let Midoriya wrap his arms around him and weep loudly into his shoulder.

"See, this is what happens when your emotional support bird leaves for point two seconds," Shinso sighed, patting him on the head where Siren should have been sitting, if she wasn't at the vets.

Midoriya laughed slightly, pulling away as he tried to wipe the tears away again.

[*I think I'm just…*] Midoriya hesitated, his hands hovering in mid air as he tried to think of the right word to say [– *tired*]

"You're Mr Aizawa?"

Midoriya punched him in the shoulder, [*You know what I mean*]

"Tired as in, you really need some sleep?" Shinso queried, grinning because he knew that the look Midoriya was giving him was one that asked why *he* of all people was asking that question.

[*That partially*] he admitted, [*and well, I'm just tired of* everything] He exaggerated the sign of that last word considerably.

"And it's all come crashing down," Shinso nodded in realisation, running his hand through his hair; he needed to put some more gel in it. It tended to flop down a bit in the evenings.

[*I'm sorry*] Midoriya continued, [*I overreacted – I… just got rather hung up about it all, I guess*]

"You didn't overreact." Shinso sighed, thinking back to what the others had said earlier, "You've… got a lot of stuff on at the moment." He raised his hands to count off the list on his fingers, "You've got Eri to look after, your Quirk to figure out, hero classes to catch up on, your mother to consider, normal classes on top of that and then *friendships* – which made everything worse."

Midoriya had finally stopped crying now. He brushed the last tears away from his red eyes with a loud sniff. [*I suppose you're right*]

There was a moment of silence whilst Midoriya shakily rummaged through the drawers near his bed to locate a packet of tissues, of which he hastily used most of them.

“Did you want to head back downstairs?” asked Shinso.

Midoriya shook his head as he threw the crumped paper into the wastepaper basket near his door. [*I don’t want Bluebird to see me looking all upset*]

“You don’t need to revolve everything you do around Eri.”

[*I know*] he shrugged, sitting back down, [*But I will*]

Shinso failed to stifle his laughter, “That’s just like you, isn’t it?! Come on, *Canary* – give yourself a break.”

[*I will when I’m dead*] he joked, smiling deviously.

“I can help with that,” Shinso deadpanned, raising an eyebrow. This reminded him of his conversations with Jiro. What were they turning this innocent little bird into?

Midoriya just laughed, rubbing at his face again, before signing, [*I need my emotional support bird*]

“That you *do*,” Shinso scoffed. “When will she be back?”

[*Not that long*] he shrugged, [*Tired – the teacher – said it depends on the traffic and how many people stop him asking about Siren*]

Shinso grinned, “Have you ever thought about how the name Siren isn’t only a reference to a mythical creature that lures you to your death with its singing – but also like, a really loud alarm bell?”

Midoriya blinked at him for a moment, before bursting into laughter.

“I honestly can’t think of a better name for her,” Shinso continued, giggling slightly alongside Midoriya. “Right – has your face stopped leaking yet?”

Midoriya pouted and nodded, sniffing one last time.

“Ok, we’re going downstairs,” Shinso insisted standing up. “And if you say no, I’m rolling you up in your duvet like a freaking sushi roll and handing you over to the mercy of Uraraka.”

He laughed and got to his feet, grabbing his mask from beside the bowl of half finished (and now rather cold) ramen that he’d abandoned. He didn’t bother taking out his cheek piece, suggesting that he was planning on coming back up here to eat soon – that or

he'd completely forgotten. The latter was quite likely.

"Good choice," Shinso grinned, opening the door wide for him as they walked out.

They started trotting down the stairs in silence. Shinso was thinking about how Midoriya would react to this Culture Festival thing, which he was now feeling a little keener on, now that they were on good terms again. He wasn't sure what Midoriya's mind was pondering, but that didn't really matter, because both of them were yanked from their thoughts about halfway down those stairs, with the sound of a very loud, ear-piercing *scream*.

– the scream of a little girl.

Shinso turned to Midoriya, who had stopped in his tracks, eyes wide. Both came to the same conclusion at the same time –

"*Eri.*"

Midoriya took off down the stairs milliseconds later, with Shinso close behind him. He bounded down two at a time; sometimes more, risking a fall as he desperately charged down towards the common room area where he had left Eri under the care of the others.

He skidded to a halt when the sight came into view, and the puzzle pieces of the event very quickly slotted into place.

The entire class had very quickly backed away – judging by the dropped cups of tea and coffee and the chairs, tossed hastily aside. In the middle of it all was Eri, sobbing hysterically on the armchair that she had been perched on with Yaoyorozu not long ago. She was crying and screaming, her hands pulling at the waterfalls of white hair around her, as a strange, powerful energy reverberated from her. And then Midoriya's eyes settled on the TV screen – and the stern face of *Overhaul.*

"What's going on?!" Shinso exclaimed, pushing past him by accident as Midoriya's eyes became transfixed on that *evil* man's face.

It was a news report of sorts – stating that the villain was dangerous

and on the run. There must have been some kind of action against him earlier that day, resulting in a public warning. But Midoriya didn't care about that at the moment – mainly because Kaminari had just hastily turned off the television, and Midoriya found himself blinking at the blank screen, like he had been hypnotised by the horrendous memories that had resurfaced.

"Midoriya?" Shinso questioned, shaking his shoulders gently as Midoriya shook his head – that was weird. Wait – Eri – he needed to focus on Eri!

He pulled himself away from his friend's grip and hurried towards the group, only to have Iida stop him again.

"Her Quirk is *dangerous*, Midoriya!"

"Shinso!" Yaoyorozu called out, "Try and use your Quirk on her!"

"Right!"

Shinso hurried back into view, pushing to the front of the crowd of anxious students, feeling helpless as they watched the poor girl's power grow wild and out of control – pulsing gold around that horn of hers, which seemed to be *growing*.

"Eri? Eri can you hear me?" Shinso called out to her.

But Eri didn't reply, she just continued to wail like a banshee, curled up in a ball and shaking.

Shinso persisted to ask her questions, none of which she answered. Her power only grew stronger. Iida had let go of Midoriya now. He was scrambling for his phone in an attempt to contact Mr Aizawa, who Midoriya knew wasn't going to be here on time – her Quirk – it looked like it was *hurting* her.

All Midoriya knew about the power was that it was dangerous; that Overhaul had some use for it. And for a villain like *him* – with access to bullets that could destroy Quirks… well, Midoriya could only guess, but his estimations were rather accurate, in his mind.

And now, with her big red eyes *submerged* in her tears, she raised her trembling head to meet Midoriya's panicked gaze. That look was a plea – a cry for help that Midoriya simply could not ignore.

Who better to step in, than the only one in that class whose Quirk was

beyond their reach anyway?

“Canary, stop!” Jiro yelled.

He hurried forwards before anyone could try and stop him and hesitated just before the little girl. Her Quirk sent a shiver down through his spine. It quickened his breath and strengthened his pulse. Or maybe that was just his nerves.

“*No!”* Eri sobbed, once she truly realised that Midoriya was too close. “No – go away! Go away – I don’t want to hurt you – I’m dangerous…”

Midoriya’s hand hovered before her. There were people yelling in the background – Shinso still desperately trying to get Eri to activate his Quirk – Iida now trying to contact Midnight – and several others attempting to reach Midoriya, but in fear of what Eri could do, persisted to stay as far back as possible.

“*I’m a curse…”* Eri whimpered, hugging her knees against her chest as the horn on the side of her head continued to grow. “*Chisaki will come for me… he’ll come for you* – you have to get away!”

Midoriya ignored her. He took a deep breath and pulled her close to him, hugging her tight.

She cried even louder, “*No – stop!”*

Now that tingling through his body most certainly wasn’t a product of adrenaline. Something about Eri’s power shot through his veins and his nerves – a shooting pain that persisted the longer he held on. Biting through, he did the only thing he could, and hummed the tune that had grown familiar to her. It couldn’t hold the power that Midoriya’s own Quirk would have taken from it, but nonetheless, the song was now associated with safety – calm – serenity. Midoriya had made sure of such.

Midoriya had learnt to give words and sounds power – with or without his Quirk.

Whatever Eri’s Quirk was doing to him though, it was starting to become unbearable. As her own tears diminished and she melted into his touch, his began to prick at the corners of his eyes. His teeth were gritted beneath his mask, biting down so hard that his entire mouth began to numb – or perhaps that was due to Eri’s power.

It felt like a lifetime – but it was only to the end of the chorus – when Eri's Quirk finally stopped.

Midoriya let go of Eri and slumped backwards – the world spinning before him.

The others descended upon the pair immediately.

Yaoyorozu grabbed Eri without fear, tilting her head away from Midoriya as she embraced her and lifted her from the chair. It was Uraraka who caught Midoriya though – that he was only sure of because of the weight of the world which was quiet literally lifted off his shoulders at her touch.

Soft… and *gentle*…

"Canary? *Canary?!* Canary *wake UP!"*

Midoriya's eyes shot back open before they were fully closed.

"He's bleeding – someone get a first aid kit!"

"What happened – what did her Quirk *do?"*

"I don't know – Midoriya – hey *Midoriya!"*

He blinked furiously – Shinso was clicking his fingers before his eyes, trying to get him to snap out of the strange, dozy state he found himself in.

He sat bolt upright, breathing erratically as he came to grips with what had just happened.

"Midoriya – *breathe,"* Shinso practically commanded, he was kneeling down in front of him – Uraraka was still supporting him from behind. Did he pass out? He didn't, right? What happened? The villains didn't react like that at *all* when they were shot with those bullets!

He stumbled to his feet, ignoring the protests of the others and accidently pushing Uraraka away. About half the class was surrounding him whilst the rest were with Yaoyorozu and Eri.

"*Don't* – go over to her," said Shinso, holding him back before he could even consider doing so. "You're bleeding – and she's still panicking."

[*Quirk* –] Midoriya barely managed to sign.

"She's stopped; she's fine, just scared," Shinso insisted.

Midoriya took a few steps back – wait, he was bleeding? Where –

Lifting his hands to his face, he felt the damp of his mask – his hand came away red. His cheek, right over his injury, was oozing red. He should… probably go to the bathroom to check that –

But then he felt something get lodged in his throat. He stumbled forwards with a cough, a hand on the back of the sofa to hold him steady as he began to choke.

The others cried out in surprise, reaching forwards, perhaps to catch him if he fell again.

No – he was going to be sick –

Midoriya pushed them away and took off to the bathroom at a run. He slammed the door shut behind him, latching it closed and then practically collapsed over the nearest sink.

He stood there for a moment, shaking as his arms took his weight above the sink. Whatever was in his throat had moved; it was back in his mouth now – ah, *ah* – it was just that plastic cheek prosthetic thing. It must have been knocked out when he fell.

There was a mirror on the wall above the sink. Ignoring whoever was knocking at the bathroom door, Midoriya raised his gaze to his reflection.

Yep, the blue fabric of the mask was stained a much darker colour with his blood. Great, this was going to have to go over his head.

Able to steady himself on his feet now, he gave into pulling the thing off. He chucked it in the sink and turned on the tap. The sound of running water must have reassured the person on the other side of the

bathroom door, because they stopped attacking the doorknob.

Midoriya spat out the cheek piece, along with disgustingly red coloured spit. He winkled his nose and wiped his face with the back of his arm. It came away red – *great.*

He sighed, ugh – was there something else in his mouth? Something felt unnatural there – maybe a piece of the mask. Oh no, please don't say he'd bitten off part of his cheek – ew, ew *no* –

He tried to spit it out – which didn't seem to work. That meant he resorted to trying to fish whatever it was out with his fingers, which… also… failed…

…wait.

Midoriya met the eyes of his reflection again.

Taking his fingers out of his mouth, he leant in a little closer to the mirror.

He tilted his head slowly to one side –

The blood was definitely coming from his cheek… but…

Raising a hand to it, he tried to wipe away the red, which only made him wince. It was like his face had *cracked…* No – no – it looked *exactly* like it did when Stain injured him.

Wait – there's no hole there.

There's no hole – where's the hole?!

Where's the…

Midoriya, with wide eyes, slowly opened his mouth.

And there was his tongue.

He stumbled backwards, hands over his mouth upon reflex.

Oh my God.

"…Oh my God," he said – *aloud. With no difficulties* –

He could *speak.*

"Midoriya?" that was Shinso – on the other side of the door.

Midoriya was now pacing back and forth in the bathroom, the tap still running, as he tried to get his head around this.

He suddenly had a tongue again – his cheek almost completely healed – oh *wait!*

He skidded to a halt by the sink again to gaze in the mirror.

It was like his body had been *teleported back in time to how it had been like after the Hosu attack…*

He'd been… *reversed?*

Eri's Quirk was reversal – it was reversal! She could *rewind* someone! That's how she could remove Quirks – reversing them back to before they'd manifested! Had she done that to Midoriya? Or had the power just focused on his injuries?

He cast his attention back to reality. He could just hear Eri's cries, still continuing back in the common room.

His *song* – if his Quirk worked again… he could properly calm her down!

Wait, wait – he was still covered in blood.

He rushed into the nearest bathroom stall, took far more of the toilet roll than necessary and dampened it with the water from the sink. He ignored the stinging pains as he wiped the blood from his hands, arm and cheek. But, ah – it was no good, his cheek persisted to bleed. How bad *was* that injury? He was so busy in the fight back then that he

barely acknowledged it.

Ok, now wasn't the time.

Turning off the tap, he picked up his mask and wrung it out the best he could, before pulling it back over his head to hide the injury.

Leaving his cheek piece and the crumpled, red tissue in the sink, he skidded back over to the door, unlatched it and threw it open.

"Midoriya are you –" Shinso started.

"Not right now!" he *said* in reply and charged past him.

Shinso just stood there in shock.

Midoriya *sprinted* back into the common room, pushing past the others to find Eri, who was now back in her armchair, with Yaoyorozu holding out tissues to her, which she refused to take.

"*WHAT THE F–?!"* Shinso swore at the top of his voice in the background after his brain had finally caught up.

Midoriya could deal with him later – Eri was the priority at the moment.

"*I-I hurt you,"* she sobbed, her voice all raspy from crying and screaming.

Meanwhile, Midoriya's was *not*, despite its disuse. Perhaps that was all down to Eri's power as well.

"*I hurt you; I'm a monster,"* she whined, "A *curse…"*

There was a spark at her horn.

Those around her panicked, stumbling backwards in surprise. The movement only made her start crying loudly again – the sparks becoming more and more frequent.

"*Shh, shh…"* Midoriya whispered, prising her hands away from her knees.

"*Let go of me…"* she said with a sniff.

Ok – right – this wasn't going to work. He needed to… he needed…

Midoriya turned his head to meet Shinso's eyes. He was standing at the corner of the crowd. Iida was telling him off for swearing with Eri around, but he was a little more focused on Midoriya in that moment.

He turned back to Eri – and took a deep breath.

~Safe & Sound – Taylor Swift and The Civil Wars~

He'd been humming this song the entire time – something he'd heard over the radio whilst he was missing. It had stuck in his head whilst he considered what its power would be. When Eri turned up, that was what he thought of, and it is the tune she'd become so familiar with.

Of course, she wouldn't understand the words. But all she needed to know, really, was that Midoriya was *singing them*.

"*I remember tears streaming down your face when I said I'd never let you go…"*

His classmates around them gasped collectively – whispers broke out amongst them. But Midoriya ignored them. It was just him and Eri at the moment.

He shuffled a little closer to her, gazing at the stars in her eyes as she listened to the song, "*I remember you said don't leave me here alone…"*

Midoriya stood up and reached forwards as he sang, scooping Eri up into his arms as her crying grew silent, null and void.

"*Just close your eyes…"* and he did just that, lost in the fact that he was *singing* again. "*You'll be alright. No one can hurt you now."*

He was smiling, although no one could see it, as he spun slowly around the room, Eri in his arms. "*–You and I'll be safe… and… sound."*

That was where he stopped.

The song – it was supposed to make her feel *safe*. Although he couldn't quite know for sure whether his Quirk had activated or not, it had done what he needed it to do.

He lowered her back down onto the nearest sofa. She wiped the tears from her face and stared at him.

Moments past with everyone just *staring* at him like he'd just come back from the dead. Which wasn't the best analogy, because he'd already experienced that type of shock, and it involved a lot more tears, but probably an equal amount of swearing.

"…You have a pretty voice," said Eri.

Midoriya laughed, "Thank you."

"…Um, Canary?" Jiro started.

Midoriya held out a hand without even looking at her, telling her to wait.

"Eri, do you know what your Quirk is?" he questioned sitting down on the sofa beside her.

She blinked and then looked down at her hands, as if they could hold the answer. "I-I… I know it's… bad…"

"Not at all," Midoriya contradicted.

She turned back to him in clear bewilderment.

"Eri… your Quirk is… well, it's *Rewind."*

"R-Rewind?"

Shinso swore again and Midoriya gave him a look, "S-Sorry," he added. "But – she… *reversed* you?"

Midoriya beamed and turned back to Eri, "*Completely* undone!" he exclaimed, waving his arms about as he spoke in excitement, "Absolutely everything!"

"But… you were bleeding…?" she frowned.

"Well, you didn't undo *all* my injuries," Midoriya explained, running his hand through his hair, "So not… absolutely everything I guess – b-but the main bits, they're all fixed. There's no *hole*, which is nice. But,

err, I think that pushed out my cheek piece thing into my mouth and I almost choked on it, ha, ha… But I also have a tongue! Which is very helpful! But also, kind of surprising when you haven't had a tongue for the last three weeks or so because it's a really weird fleshy muscle kind of thing and *ah* – this is really weird! It feels so *weird* – why is this considered the norm it's –"

"Oh my God, Midoriya – *STOP TALKING!"* Shinso yelled, pulling at his hair. There was a brilliant smile on his face though.

"*No,"* Midoriya contradicted with a grin, "Shut up, I'm busy panicking."

It was Eri's turn to speak again now – and Midoriya was still trying to figure out how to talk and *breathe* at the same time. "Then why are you bleeding?" she insisted.

"Oh, that was Stain, I think."

"…Stain?"

"A villain," he replied, before quickly adding, "Who was surprisingly far better company than any of our friends! At least he had second guesses on whether he should kill me."

Wait, he probably shouldn't have said that – oh well, she didn't seem too phased.

"You need to forget what he told you," Midoriya insisted, patting her on the head with a smile. "Which I know is hard, but he was wrong. You're not a curse."

"B-But I –"

"You're a unicorn, right?"

She just blinked at him.

"I know you know what unicorns are, because you drew a picture the other day – see, look. You have a horn too! That makes you a unicorn."

"…It does?" she asked, reaching up to her horn uncertainly.

"Yep!" he said, popping the p, because he *could.* "A do you know what a group of unicorns is called?"

She cocked her head to one side in confusion.

Midoriya grinned, picking her up again, “You get a pack of wolves and a flock of birds – a herd of horses. So, do you know what it is for unicorns?”

“…A herd?”

“Nope! It’s a blessing.”

“A… blessing?”

“That’s what you are, Miss Miracle – a blessing. Which… kind of implies that you are more than one unicorn but I honestly can’t think straight at the moment so we’re just gonna roll with that.”

Eri reached forwards and grasped his damp mask. It fell from his face easily, exposing the ugly red of his cheek. He just smiled.

That was when someone leapt forwards and hugged him from behind – which turned out to be Uraraka. Moments later, Jiro joined in – then Shinso, Todoroki and even Iida. Everyone else was just crying. Seconds later, so was Midoriya – laughing and crying at the same time.

And through it all, he could have sworn he saw Eri smile.

Chapter End Notes

yyyyyyyyyyeeeeeeeeeeeEEEEEEAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHH

FINALLY

OH MY GOD

YES

Could this have been two chapters? *Absolutely* – this chapter is over ten and a half *thousand* words long.

Would this have been two chapters if I didn't write the beginning notes before finishing the chapter? *Possibly* – I would have been risking your wrath though and I don't think I can deal with that again.

I was going to though.

That was the *plan.*

That was why I said chapter 42 was going to have an evil cliff hanger because I was going to end it as soon as Midoriya and Shinso heard Eri scream.

Oh well, too late. Yes, you *author* – sitting here and pondering whether or not to split the chapter because it is currently… 6:16pm on the evening before uploading and my mum has just told me off for being late to feed the animals – and splitting the chapter would mean less work for me for the next five days.

Don't do it.

No.

You will *die.*

Someone will *hunt you down*. Probably from the Discord.

Ok – right – time to stop rambling.

Songs used in this chapter:

Safe & Sound – Taylor Swift and The Civil Wars – cover by Sam Tsui and Kurt Schneider

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u41DQn8mQT4

And here is the short but sweet art section!

FiveInBinaryOr101 is up first with a *beautiful* depiction of Midoriya's and Bakugo's silent argument XD

Thelovypop17 has two arts this time around! Two arts for what should have been two chapters – one showing Midoriya's excitement for finding his train/student card when he escaped – and the other for our pretty little Bluebird!

The Sweet Taste of Freedom

Chapter Notes

Merry Christmas! Have a filler chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This little bird was driving Aizawa around the *bend*. He should have asked Midoriya for a cage or something. Because he was currently driving back to UA, with that stupid little green *thing* flying in circles in the back. He was *so* tempted to just… *test his breaks*. Although, if that resulted in her hurting her wing again, he'd have to take her *back* to the vets, and his sanity wouldn't be able to take that.

When he finally came to a stop in the teachers' designated parking area, once Hound Dog had given him the all clear, that was, he threw open the door to the back of his car and Siren *rocketed* out and into the night.

He stood there, squinting as he watched her silhouette whizz back and forth, relishing in her ability to fly again.

With a sigh, he returned to his car to collect his things. He didn't bring much with him, and he wasn't gone very long – they were straight in and out of the vets. It wasn't very busy and they had a pre-booked appointment for a kind of famous animal. Aizawa picked up his phone and locked his car, almost forgetting to turn off the lights in the process.

He turned on his phone as he was walking back to the dorms, vaguely watching Siren as she darted around him.

That was when he stopped in his tracks, for mere seconds – before taking off at a *run* towards Heights Alliance. Because of *course* the *moment* he leaves that class alone – something happens.

***Tenya Iida** : Eri's power has activated and we are unable to calm her down*

***Tenya Iida** : Shinso is trying to use his Quirk on her*

Tenya Iida: *Midoriya managed to get her to stop. He is hurt*

But then he started to slow, frowning, as he read the last message.

Tenya Iida *: Everything is fine.*

Well.

…*Well.*

He did not believe that for one second.

And so, picking up the pace again, Aizawa soon reached the door to the dorms, tossing it open without a moment's hesitation and skidding inside without taking off his shoes.

He blinked. He didn't know *what* he had been expecting – but it wasn't *this*.

"What's going on?" he demanded, marching through the common room area.

Most of the class seemed to be there. Iida seemed to have enough sense to go and get some members of authority, which explained the presence of Midnight and Recovery Girl. The former was currently sitting on a sofa, with Eri collapsed in her lap, snoring soundly beside Yaoyorozu, who was dabbing her eyes with a tissue. In fact, quite a lot of Aizawa's students seemed to be crying, or at least holding back the tears.

All this came down to why Recovery Girl was here.

Midoriya was sitting on a chair that had been pulled over to the middle of the common room. He was grinning stupidly – something that Recovery Girl seemed to be telling him off for, because she was currently trying to treat his bleeding cheek.

Before Aizawa could ask anymore questions, Siren whizzed in through the open door, narrowly missing his ear.

"Siren!" Midoriya exclaimed.

Wait –

Midnight grabbed his shoulder and pulled him aside. She'd left Eri's sleeping form with Yaoyorozu as she hurried over.

"They figured out what Eri's Quirk is," she whispered to him with a sly grin.

Aizawa stared, "They did *what?"*

"Apparently Eri saw the face of the villain who held her captive on TV, and it set her off," Midnight explained. "Canary jumped in to try and calm her down and faced the full brunt of her Quirk."

Yes – and *once again*, Aizawa is reminded why he shouldn't have let Midoriya out of his sight. "But her Quirk is –"

"Dangerous, yes," Midnight sighed, stopping him from running over to the boy, who was still being examined by Recovery Girl. "Canary's called it *Rewind."*

"Rewind?" Aizawa repeated. "What did it do?"

Midnight let out a small laugh, "Rewound him! Removed most of his injuries – ending up with replenishing the damage that *Stain* dealt. Iida went to get me to help get Eri to sleep – but I wasn't really needed, she was practically nodding off by the time I arrived. He got Recovery Girl too, because Canary refused to leave Eri alone, even with that injury."

Aizawa blinked, "But what about his tongue?"

She smiled, "Well… that's just it."

…Oh boy.

Aizawa didn't wait for another word as he marched over to Midoriya, who was now being attacked by a rather large plaster, courtesy of Recovery Girl. His face wasn't bleeding anymore, and the rest of the

red had been cleaned off, although, Aizawa could just see the inkling of scars marring his skin as it was hidden by the plaster.

“Problem child,” Aizawa practically spat. He didn’t mean to sound harsh – it’s just… come *on!*

Midoriya grinned wildly, the plaster wrinkling as he did so. He didn’t seem to mind – and it looked *far* better than it had when he smiled with part of his face missing. “Hello, Mr Aizawa,” he said – *out loud,* “I thought you said I wasn’t allowed to leave your sight anymore?”

Aizawa sighed but grinned softly, “Yes, for this exact reason.”

He just shrugged, still smiling, “I don’t see this as too much of a bad thing.”

“We’ll see about that,” Aizawa deadpanned. “If you end up being as irritating as your bird, I’m sending you both back to Mic’s class.”

“You can try,” he said, raising an eyebrow. His voice sounded a little raspy now. Perhaps that was from disuse – or *over* usage in such a short space of time.

Aizawa had an odd feeling that this, once mute, little bird – would never shut up again.

Midoriya woke up the next morning with Siren on his face.

Groggily, he pushed her off, ignoring the disgruntled squeak as she fell to the floor. That bird was made of strong enough stuff to survive being tossed around by *numerous* angry villains. She could deal with a little rough and tumble.

Midoriya himself was moments away from rolling out of his bed. He must have had some strange dreams that night, because his pillow had been tossed across the room and his duvet was upside down. He lay there for a while, thinking of going back to sleep, his eyelids slowly drifting closed, the glowing red numbers of his alarm clock reading six am.

But then he remembered.

Opening his eyes wide, he reached up to the side of his face with shaking hands, slightly worried that Eri's Quirk was not a permanent thing. But no, the plaster that Recovery Girl had placed there was not hiding a gaping hole – only the scars that once again, were left stubbornly behind. Sitting upright now, he let his tongue run along the backs of his teeth as he smiled brightly.

This was going to be a good day.

Now that he'd thought that through, he really couldn't bring himself to fall back to sleep, so, he leapt out of bed, changed into his uniform, and wandered out of his room, Siren perched happily on his shoulder, snuggled up to his neck.

He half expected at least Iida or Yaoyorozu to be up, but no one was in sight downstairs. Perhaps yesterday evening had been a little tiring for all of them.

With a sigh, he concluded that hanging around here wasn't going to do him any good, so, he pulled on his shoes, and went out for a morning walk.

The air was crisp and dew blanketed the grass, glistening in the morning light. Birds were singing around him, and Siren joined in diligently. Midoriya would have done so too, if that hole in his cheek didn't stop him from –

Oh, wait! He could whistle again!

Which is exactly what he did.

He leant up against a tree, whistling a made-up tune alongside Siren, just relishing in the fact that he *could.*

But he wasn't the only one up at this hour, as it seems. And he'd gotten *various* odd looks from people, who walked past and did a rather dramatic double take once they realised who he was. No one actually stopped though. They were mostly hero students, as it seemed, out for a morning jog. One or two had tripped over tree roots as they looked over their shoulders to wave at him with a bewildered expression on their faces – all but one.

"Aren't you Canary?" he asked, stopping in his tracks.

Midoriya stopped whistling and grinned, "That's me," he replied and – *wow* his throat hurt a *lot.* It was not like that last night, when talking

came so easily to him after so long. Hm – why could that be? It could have been just because of the lack of use, or maybe it was something to do with how he felt after his battle against Stain – *exhausted*.

The older hero student blinked, “Oh, wait – you can talk?”

Midoriya tried to clear his throat but ended up just making a *so-so* movement with his hands.

“Oh wow – that’s great!” he exclaimed enthusiastically. He put his hands on his hips, watching Siren fly around above their heads gleefully for a moment. “I thought you were completely out of the running to be a hero, if you get what I mean – after everything that happened to you. That’s really cool!”

Midoriya just smiled again and rubbed the back of his head sheepishly.

“Your surgery went well then?” the guy assumed, giving Midoriya a thumbs up, “Your voice will get better in time – once you start using it again, that is!”

Midoriya blinked at him, of course, the outsider from class 1-A had no *idea* about Eri’s involvement. There was a good chance he didn’t even know who Eri *was*.

“I’m Mirio, by the way,” he grinned, holding out a hand, which Midoriya awkwardly took.

“Midoriya,” he replied with a cracking voice.

Mirio just laughed, and then waved goodbye as he continued on his jog, “Good luck with everything, Canary!”

Well, that was weird.

Midoriya just stood there for a while longer, before he realised that time was really starting to slip by.

With a final whistle to Siren, Midoriya ran back down the path and back into the dorms, chucking off his shoes to go upstairs and collect his rucksack.

“Hi, Canary!” Uraraka called, waving enthusiastically from the kitchen area as Midoriya hurried past.

“Morning!” he called back croakily. He heard her stifle a laugh at how

much he'd wrecked his voice from talking so much the night before.

But before he could reach the stairs, he walked right into Jiro.

"Oh, hey, Canary!" Jiro exclaimed, jumping backwards a few paces, pulling her phone from her ear. "H-How's your voice?"

"Err…" he laughed.

Jiro waved off the comment, easily hearing how raspy it sounded. "But, anyway – um… you see, yesterday – before all… *this* – happened. I, um…" She bit her lip, glancing between her phone and Midoriya. "Y-You know what? Never mind – but, you should probably… contact Aozora about radio stuff! Yeah – you should do that."

Midoriya smiled brightly – *he could go back on the radio show!* He quickly signed a thank you to her and waved as he hurried past and up the stairs. He didn't think much of Jiro's awkwardness. Perhaps she was just happy to be able to have a proper conversation with him again.

But now, as Midoriya was shoving various items into his rucksack to start the day, he hesitated by his chest of drawers. His numerous draw-stringed bags of bird seed were sitting there – similar to the ones he'd destroyed back at the summer camp. He hesitated, and then went to route through his collection of things that the school had kept when he went missing. And there, bundled up with his wash kit, were a few lingering throat lozenges – the ones that Present Mic had gifted him.

He popped one of them in his mouth as he skipped down the stairs, but then stopped halfway down.

He'd forgotten things could taste so nice.

Now, as he wandered back down to the front door and pulled back on his shoes to head over to homeroom, forgetting all about breakfast (he'd rather lost the motivation to eat when he could hardly taste anything – it was a habit that he'd soon break out of), he found himself humming softly to the bright, wonderful world around him, the vibrations of his throat feeling less and less painful.

It was the first time since he returned, that he really felt… *free*.

Jiro never thought that the miraculous return of Canary's voice would put so much pressure on her shoulders.

Maybe… she was over thinking all of this. All she needed to do was go up to him, explain what Aozora had offered her with the radio show, and tell him it didn't matter anymore and he could have it back! It wasn't like she'd actually confirmed anything anyway…

She twiddled one of her earphone jacks around her fingers thoughtfully, listening to Canary's humming as he gazed out the window, headphones on, as he waited, like everyone else, for Mr Aizawa to arrive for homeroom.

Honestly, she'd started to get really excited about the radio show. She shouldn't have expected it to be a straightforward thing though. Aozora had jumped the gun by offering the position to Jiro, although, she could see why she did it.

That was when Mr Aizawa walked in.

She sat up straight, casting thoughts of the radio show to the side as she focused on what she was actually here for – class.

Mr Aizawa, however, had other ideas.

He didn't even sit down, spreading his hands out on his desk as he cast his gaze over the class. "You're all here so I'm not going to bother with the register," he admitted – which was honestly the logical conclusion. He turned his furious gaze to – of course – Canary. "Midoriya, has anything changed?"

Canary had taken off his headphones at this point. Jiro could still hear the music softly playing through them though. Siren sat between them, on the desk, rocking slowly from side to side. "Not really," he grinned. His voice sounded a *little* better than it had earlier.

"Ok," Mr Aizawa sighed, "I need all of you to understand that we cannot reveal the circumstances of Midoriya's recovery to the world."

That caused some commotion.

"But, Sir?!" Iida exclaimed, "Midoriya is quite well known, and the world already knows that he was injured too badly to speak again! How could you possibly explain how he was healed?"

“We *cannot* reveal Eri’s involvement,” he insisted. “There has been some serious developments on Eri’s case in the past few days, evident from the news,” he glanced at Canary. “If Midoriya wishes to explain further, he can. But do not push him.”

There were a few sideways glances at Canary, Jiro included. But Midoriya’s expression did not waver. Jiro knew how Midoriya felt about his secrets – they *all* did. Pushing him would *not* help *anyone,* despite how much they all wanted to know what happened when he was with the villains – and how Eri really came into all this.

“We will be explaining that his surgery was pushed forwards a few days and was able to fix his injuries, ok, Midoriya?”

He nodded in understanding as he folded up his headphones and shoving them in his bag.

Mr Aizawa sighed even deeper, “Luckily, we never revealed exactly how Midoriya was injured, so this is a very reasonable explanation.”

Come to think of it, even *Jiro* wasn’t too sure how badly Canary had been hurt. Well, the cheek part was obvious – but it must have been worse than that if he couldn’t speak at all. Perhaps something to do with his throat? Oh, maybe his tongue? Either way – that must have really hurt…

“Midoriya – you need to go to Principal Nedzu at lunch to contact your mother and the hospital in order to cancel your *real* surgery. The Principal will know who’s trustworthy enough to explain the full story to, and who isn’t.”

Another nod.

“Ok,” and Mr Aizawa sighed again. Jiro felt a little sorry for him – ever since Canary joined their class, their number of… *incidences* had really gone up another notch. “You’re wanted in home economics early to help set up.”

Jiro noticed Midoriya turning excitably to Shinso, sitting on the desk behind him.

“*Food,”* he giggled.

Shinso raised an eyebrow and returned the grin, “Stuff you can *actually taste.”*

Jiro bit her lip as she stood up. Yeah – he must have lost his tongue…

She wanted to know what happened – more than ever. There was just so much… *stuff* to sort out.

"You prepared for my horrible cooking?" Shinso laughed as the two of them walked past Jiro obliviously.

"If you're prepared for mine," Canary chuckled, holding his hands over his throat like it was still hurting him as he laughed.

Jiro tried to push those complicated feelings aside, reaching Tokoyami's side on the way to head to Home Ec.

Everything was going to be *fine*.

Midoriya's mother was currently crying hysterically over the phone.

"M-Mum? Mum!" Midoriya attempted to get through to her. He could picture her now, collapsed on the sofa, surrounding by the piles of tissues that the toilet rolls had now turned into.

He'd called her only five minutes ago. Well, Principal Nedzu had called her, at the mercy of Midoriya's sore, disused voice. He had tried to explain, in as little detail as possible, the accident with Eri. Midoriya sat in the chair opposite his desk, fidgeting uncomfortably as he heard the distant voice of his mother, starting to panic when she thought something terrible had happened.

In the end, he was forced to hand the phone over to Midoriya. And at the sound of his fully intact, if not a little croaky, voice – she broke down.

"*You can* speak!" she wheezed after way too long.

"Yes, and Mum – we need to sort out that hospital appointment; I don't need it anymore – wait, no – Mum, *stop crying! It's ok!"*

She blew her nose dramatically.

"Could you put her on speaker-phone, Midoriya?" Principal Nedzu soon interrupted.

Midoriya frantically did as he was told, almost dropping his phone as he did so.

"Now, Mrs Midoriya – I think it is best to call us back in a few hours," he smiled. "Ring me using my UA contact number and then I'll help you with this hospital situation. I think right now it would be best to have a little time to yourself; this is understandably quite a shock. But your son's voice is still rather disused and very sore."

"*Yes, yes,"* she sniffed. "*Oh, thank you so much – y-you have no idea how much –"*

Principal Nedzu just laughed, "That's quite alright. I'll be here all day! So, call whenever you're ready. But Mrs Midoriya, you must understand that the situation surrounding young Eri is very delicate and mustn't be revealed to the general public. We will not be telling the rest of the world that she was behind Midoriya's recovery, because of this. I will tell you more a little later when you feel ready for it."

"*T-Thank you,"* she sobbed.

And that was the end of *that* conversation.

Midoriya smiled as he tucked his phone back into his blazar pocket. He looked up to see Principal Nedzu fondly stroking Siren, perched before him on his desk. Without tearing his gaze away from her (he was *rather* fond of the little bird) he said, "Sorry, Midoriya, but you are most likely going to have to experience quite a few of these reveals today."

Midoriya just continued to smile. It wasn't like there was anything he could do about it – and honestly, they were kind of fun.

"Why don't you head down to lunch?" the Principal suggested, picking up Siren and handing her over to him. "I'll contact you when we manage to sort out cancelling your surgery."

Midoriya stood up, nodded, and then gave a little bow in thank you to the small mammal, before slinging his rucksack back over his shoulder and briskly walking down to lunch.

He stood in the queue by himself. When he reached the end, he came to the profound realisation that… had he *ever* done this before? He'd *always* been with Shinso in the queue – or Koda in the last few days – so that one of them could translate his sign for him to order. Lunch Rush must have been rather shocked when Midoriya appeared by

himself, although it wasn't particularly easy to tell by his face, which didn't *really* show much emotion. But there was *Katsudon* today, and Midoriya had been just eating boring foods like plain old *rice* for the past week or so, with far too much hot sauce tipped over it. Everything else just got too messy to eat – and it wasn't like the taste was particularly appealing without a tongue anyway. But if you didn't count the food offered at the summer camp, because that wasn't that great either, to be honest, it had been… well, pretty much an entire *month* since he actually *enjoyed* his food.

Something else he enjoyed, was Lunch Rush's apparent shock at him *speaking aloud* to order his meal – a shock that Midoriya could clearly see due to the way he did a double take and *stared* for a moment. The people around him in the queue were a little surprised too. Midoriya tried not to laugh.

"caNARY!" came the frightfully loud sound of Uraraka's voice. It drew far more attention than Midoriya was happy having, resulting in him scurrying across the lunch hall with his tray, painstakingly aware of the stares and the whispers.

"Eek!" Uraraka giggled, almost flinging some of her soup at Iida. "Can you believe this is the *first time* all six of us are eating together as hero course buddies!"

They all blinked at her for a moment, "Oh yeah," Todoroki voiced, before quickly going back to his soba.

"Hm, before the summer camp seems like a lifetime ago now," said Jiro, and she was right.

Midoriya shoved a mouthful of his food in his mouth, and *oh my God, yes, food tastes so good.*

"What about you, Midoriya?" questioned Iida.

Midoriya quickly swallowed, which was rather soothing for his sore throat. "I-I um – I'm happy to be able to taste things properly a-again," he grinned, before shovelling more food into his mouth.

That brought a smile out of a few of them, if not a slightly pitiful one.

They left him be for a while, but he didn't need long to finish his food. He didn't think he'd *ever* eaten so quickly.

Most of them just stared at Siren, who was busy attacking the various

sauces and bottles left on the table by whoever was there before them.

“So, um, Canary?” Jiro frowned, pocking at what was left in her own bowl a few minutes later. “I-If it’s ok to ask, was it… your tongue? Is that what stopped you from speaking properly?”

Midoriya blinked at her, “U-Um, yes… I didn’t have one… D-Did you not know –”

“I didn’t tell them,” Shinso interrupted, taking a sip of his water. “And neither did you – see, I’m not *that* bad at keeping secrets. Just with you, it’s hard to tell what secrets you want to keep and what are the slightest bit ok to spill.”

Midoriya ran his hand through his hair sheepishly. “W-Well, um… Yeah… sorry.”

“Why should you be sorry?” interjected Todoroki. “Everyone has secrets.”

Everyone blinked at him. Yeah – he was one to talk. The only one he’d told about the true nature of his scar was Midoriya himself.

“I am *really* sorry about what happened with Bakugo,” Shinso continued.

“I know,” Midoriya replied. It didn’t mean he could *really* forgive him for it – but there was nothing he could do now but move on. “It’s ok.”

“But if you ever want to talk to us about all these secrets of yours,” Iida offered, “know that we’re here for you. And we shall certainly be sure of your confirmation before telling anyone else,” he finished, after a quick look in Shinso’s direction. He nodded in understanding.

Midoriya smiled. He couldn’t stay mad at Shinso, he *really* was sorry, and Midoriya was pretty much dead at the point in time when said secrets were spilled anyway… “Thank you.”

There was another moment of tense silence, before, “Looking forward to our English lesson this afternoon?” Uraraka grinned.

Midoriya grinned back, thinking *specifically* of their teacher, “Oh yeah – *definitely.”*

Apparently, something had happened with Midoriya and Eri last night. At least, that was all Yamada had managed to squeeze out of Aizawa. He was busy running around talking with Principal Nedzu and keeping a *very* close eye on Eri, who was with Recovery Girl last time Present Mic checked, showing the inklings of a fever.

Anyway, he had English now, so the matter would finally be put to rest.

"And that's it for the register!" Present Mic exclaimed to good old class 1-C. "Sit tight for mathematics! I'm off –"

"Hey, Mr Present Mic?" called out Ohchi, holding her hand high into the air.

"*Yes?* What's up, Ms Class President?!"

"Whatever happened to Midoriya?" she questioned, cocking her head to one side.

"M-Midoriya?" Yamada frowned.

"Yeah, *I* spied him at lunch!" Koneko added, "I haven't seen him for like, *months* – and he isn't wearing a mask anymore – I thought he had to wear a mask 'cause his mouth was like, all messed up, right?"

"I heard he had some kind of surgery," said Tachibana.

"I am not sure myself!" Present Mic interrupted. All of this was very confusing – he wasn't aware Midoriya have braved going to lunch at *all* since he got back. "But I'm going to class 1-A right now! So, I can feed you back the details," he grinned, and gave them finger guns as he backed out of the door, "Stay tuned!"

He dropped the facade as soon as the door closed, and his beaming grin dropping into a puzzled frown. He didn't think Midoriya's surgery was for a few days yet – some time in the middle of next week.

Present Mic would be lying if he said he didn't take off at a run up the corridor to class 1-A. Hand twitching before the door, it only took a few moments for him to lose patience in waiting for Aizawa to leave after registration, and he tossed it open wide.

"*HHHEEELLLOOO!"* he yelled as his friend tossed his sleeping bag over

his shoulder and trudged out of the classroom with a roll of his tired eyes. “Who’s ready for some *enGLISH?!”*

The one who wasn’t, ironically, was Yamada himself, because it took mere seconds for him to zero in on his favourite student’s face – beaming and lacking that very important mask that his own class had pointed out.

Now, he was pointing dramatically at him, yelling, “*WAIT, WHAT?!”*

A good proportion of the rest of them were stifling their laughter now or else grinning stupidly.

“Hey there, Cockatoo,” Midoriya *said* slyly.

Present Mic just stared.

Did he just…

Wait – he could –

It was safe to say that the following *English lesson* wasn’t much of an English lesson.

Present Mic was a little more hooked up over the fact that… well, it felt like it was finally over.

The danger had passed.

The Canary was singing again.

Aozora’s Birdies

*This chat group includes Aozora Shaberu {**Mama Birdy**}, Izuku Midoriya {**Best Baby Fledgling Birdy**}, Hitoshi Shinso {**Mean Fledgling Baby Birdy**} and Kyoka Jiro {**Also a Mean Fledgling Birdy**}.*

Best Baby Fledgling Birdy: *We have a bit of a situation*

Mama Birdy: *No.*

Best Baby Fledgling Birdy: *You can't just say no!*

Mama Birdy: *You're not allowed to be late.*

Mama Birdy: *I forbid it.*

Mama Birdy: *Tell the train people –*

Mama Birdy: *that it's forbidden*

Mean Fledgling Baby Birdy: *The media's being a pain*

Mama Birdy: *I AM the media*

Mean Fledgling Baby Birdy: *The people crowding the radio station are most definitely not clones of you so I'd have to contradict that statement*

Also a Mean Fledgling Birdy: *The secret back entrance has loads of media milling around.*

Also a Mean Fledgling Birdy: *Because of the café*

Also a Mean Fledgling Birdy: *We're early so they're waiting back there before it's time for us to arrive.*

Also a Mean Fledgling Birdy: *And can we have our old names back now?*

Mama Birdy: *No, I haven't forgiven you yet.*

Mean Fledgling Baby Birdy: *Why am I a baby and Jiro's not?*

Mama Birdy: *Favouritism*

Mean Fledgling Baby Birdy: *Oh, I see how it is, Blue Hair*

Mama Birdy: *SEE THIS IS WHAT I MEAN*

Mama Birdy: *STOP CALLING ME THAT*

Mean Fledgling Baby Birdy: *I don't see how that nickname validates me as mean!*

Mama Birdy: *meAN*

Best Baby Fledgling Birdy: *Can we focus on getting to the radio station please?*

Mama Birdy: *Yes, we can't have you out in the wild long*

Best Baby Fledgling Birdy: *What's that supposed to mean?!*

Also a Mean Fledgling Birdy: *You know what it means, Canary*

Blue Mama Birdy: *Aren't you all together? Why are you having conversations here rather than in real life?*

Mean Fledgling Baby Birdy: *Because we're hiding*

Best Baby Fledgling Birdy: *We are talking but we're mainly panicking*

Also a Mean Fledgling Birdy: **Canary is panicking*

Mama Birdy: *you wILL COME INTO THE RADIO TODAY*

Mama Birdy: *I HAVE BEEN CRYING FOR THE PAST 3 DAYS*

Mama Birdy: *I HAVE YET TO HEAR YOU SPEAK AGAIN*

Mama Birdy: *THE PUBLIC DEMANDS TO HEAR YOU*

Best Baby Fledgling Birdy: *YES, THAT'S THE PROBLEM*

Also a Mean Fledgling Birdy: *Are you going to save us or not?*

Mama Birdy: *I'm thinking about it*

Aozora peered out the window, her nose pressed against the glass as she gazed down at the street, far below.

Yep – that was a *lot* of people, Jesus *Christ.*

She narrowed her eyes. Desperately trying to tilt her head enough to see where the secret entrance to the radio building came out. She couldn't quite see it, but by the sheer *volume* of people, she supposed her little co-hosts had thought better than to attempt wandering in through that way. As budding heroes, of course they decided not to. If they got seen entering the building through the backdoor, it would no longer be a viable option for those who really needed it, like people that White Noise saved, who needed as little fuss as possible.

That left the only option as being the *main* entrance – and *that* meant wading through the crowd that hovered outside it.

But did she regret advertising Canary's return to the radio?

No, absolutely not.

The attention that the show was getting because of it just made her *cackle* with glee.

Apparently, Canary's surgery had gone *way* better than they had initially hoped. Like – *miraculously* better. It took a couple of days for poor Canary to get used to it all again, but now, he was not only communicating properly and eating and all that jazz – but well enough to go back on the *radio!*

Of course, Aozora *leapt* at the opportunity. She could sort out this thing with Owl later – but maybe she could still come on like, every Thursday! Rather than Tuesdays *and* Thursdays, which was Canary's thing. But, at mercy to Canary's still *slightly* sore voice, she had thought having the three of them on at once would be the best solution. And, with a pout, she'd have to admit that singing would best be avoided for the time being.

Best Baby Fledgling Birdy: *We're coming*

Oh, shoot – she needed to stop daydreaming.

Not bothering to take off her headphones, she yelled over to Nakano, "TELL PRESENT MIC I'M SAVING CANARY AND THE OTHERS!"

He flinched at the volume, almost knocking off his own headset, "NO NEED TO SHOUT," he shouted back.

Aozora just ignored him, shoved her phone in her pocket, and ran over to the elevator. She wasn't quite sure how she was going to disperse the crowd, but she could at least *try*.

Midoriya really *was* panicking. "Oh – there's so many people. Why does there have to be *so many?!"*

"Calm *down,"* Shinso sighed, "S-Stop – *stop* bouncing. It's not helping; it's just making me dizzy."

"Come on," Jiro grinned, "Let's just go. There'll be even *more* reporters in a minute. We came a little early for this exact reason, right?"

"You've texted Aozora right?" Shinso questioned, glancing down at the messages one last time, "Yeah, you've said we're going, so let's *go!"*

The two of them grabbed an arm each, after a mischievous glance in each other's direction, and marched Midoriya forwards, out from around the corner they'd been hiding behind.

Midoriya stumbled forwards and out of their grasp. Now Siren was joining in on urging him forwards, grasping the sleeve of his jacket and flying on ahead.

"Yes, yes, *ok!"* Midoriya exclaimed, yanking his wrist away from her.

Aaaaand then they saw them.

The three of them (four, if you included Siren), were *immediately* swarmed.

So many lights and flashes and questions were tossed around that Midoriya didn't even know where to *look*.

Jiro and Shinso seemed to be dealing with this a little better though.

Shinso, who had his hood up and pulled far down over his head, went up behind Midoriya and pushed him forwards by the shoulders, whilst Jiro walked in ahead, marching confidently forwards and yelling,

"*EXCUSE ME!"* every couple of seconds.

But they got about halfway through the crowd before they got *rather* insistent.

"*What do you think about the heroes' incompetence regarding your rescue?!"*

"How did you get out?"

"How were you injured? Do you –"

"Do you blame the heroes in any way for the events of the past few weeks?!"

"What about UA's influence? Do you think they've helped or just made things worse?!"

"Hey – get out of the way!" that was Aozora. Midoriya lit up at the sight of her blue figure, quite literally pushing her way through the crowd.

She reached them and sighed deeply, "Ok, fledglings, let's go," she grinned in that creepy smile Shinso loved so much.

But she turned around and the questionable pathway she'd forged to the front doors was already gone.

"*Are you the manager?!"*

"Do you really think it's ok to be going back to the radio show so soon after –"

"Ok – *BACK OFF!"* she shouted, but no one budged one bit.

The questions were getting worse now.

At first it had just been a little overbearing – but now it was *frightening*. They just got closer and closer.

This was the first time Midoriya had been out in public since he came back from hospital. *Anyone* could have been in that crowd – *waiting*…

"I said BACK **OFF**!" Aozora yelled.

And then she *roared.*

Everyone stared.

Her jaw had dropped, revealing *rows and rows* of sharp, needle like teeth – it was almost like she had a *second jaw* that snapped out at them. It all happened so quickly that Midoriya didn't really get a good look at it, considering he was kind of behind her.

The questions ceased *immediately*.

The crowd parted before her as she straightened the headphones nestled in amongst her hair. With a satisfied nod, she marched forwards, tossed open the blacked out, glass doors, and let Midoriya, Shinso and Jiro hurry in ahead of her.

When they were safe on the other side, the three of them turned and *stared* at her.

Her cheeks flushed a strange, dark blue, "W-What?"

"That – that was awesome," Jiro gaped.

Midoriya started bouncing up and down again, with Siren stubbornly holding onto his hair.

"Your Quirk is *so cool!"* he exclaimed.

She was obviously trying not to smile even wider, "T-Thanks." Wait no, was she holding back *tears?*

"This answers so many questions I didn't have but Midoriya probably did," Shinso grinned. "I'd keep moving before he asks about a million more."

"But I have *so many questions!"* said Midoriya, proving Shinso's point, but he didn't care.

Jiro grabbed his wrist and dragged him towards the elevator as he continued to stare at Aozora with stars in his eyes.

Aozora was busy sniffed as she tried to tell the two receptionists to sign the three of them into the building. It took a while for her to actually get the words out.

Now they were in the elevator, on the way up to the thirteenth floor. Jiro had been mumbling to Aozora about something that Midoriya couldn't quite catch, but the latter waved it off for another time.

Then they were quiet for a moment, before –

Midoriya quickly turned to Aozora, "…So, do you have a pharyngeal jaw?"

"Oh my God, Canary," Jiro laughed.

"W-What?!"

"You don't understand," Shinso sighed, shaking his head in disbelief. "He's always been like this – just now he's saying it all *out loud."*

The elevator reached their floor and opened with a soft *ping*. When Midoriya turned around, his eyes met the big, watery grey of Aozora's.

"You really *are* crying, Onion," Shinso scoffed as he walked backwards into the waiting room outside the studio.

"S-Stop calling me n-names," she stammered, squeezing her eyes tight shut as she tried and failed to blink away the tears.

Midoriya blinked back at her as she gazed down at him (she was rather tall).

"*I've missed you, little Canary,"* she whispered, and then bent down a little to pull him into a tight embrace.

Canary smiled over her shoulder as he gently patted her on the back. "You too… Swallow."

It took about a second for her to splutter into laughter. She stood back, wiping the water away from her eyes. With a sigh, she added, "Don't you dare fly off again. For my sanity."

He grinned and laughed, "Well, if it's for your sanity."

Present Mic's Radio Show!

Tuesdays and Thursdays from 18:30 to 19:30

Canary's Hour

PRESENT MIC: YYYEEEAAAHHH – Let's go! *RAVEN!*

RAVEN: Oh, um – yeah?

PRESENT MIC: GOOD JOB – *OWL!*

OWL: Whoop.

PRESENT MIC: GOOD ENOUGH! *AAANNNDDD* everyone's favourite co-host – let's hear it frooommm – SIREN!

Stifled laughter is heard alongside a determined chirp

PRESENT MIC: Ok, I'm joking – let's hear a YEAH from CANARY!

CANARY: Um, y-yay?

PRESENT MIC: *YYYEEEAAAHHH!* It's six thirty on a *good old* Tuesday evening! And we are *here* for the long-awaited return *of*…

A moment of silence

PRESENT MIC: *That's your cue* –

CANARY: Wait, what?

OWL & RAVEN: It's Canary's –

OWL & RAVEN: Jinx!

PRESENT MIC: IT'S CANARY'S HOUR!

CANARY: Yay!

PRESENT MIC: And *that's* more like it! *Welcome* to the *official* return of Canary's Hour! Where we have *one* rabid bird!

RAVEN: One? I beg to differ.

PRESENT MIC: *TWO* rabid birds!

OWL: Woah, woah – who is included in this measurement?

PRESENT MIC: ARE YOU GOING TO LET ME FINISH?!

RAVEN: No.

PRESENT MIC: OK THEN YOU DO IT!

RAVEN: Right – we're introducing the person to our left.

CANARY: Oh no.

RAVEN: We have *one* previously mute canary who now doesn't know how to stop talking.

CANARY: *One* sleep deprived, ex-sign-language-translator who doesn't know what to do with himself now I can talk again.

RAVEN: Ok, first of all, I'm not on your left.

The sound of Canary's chair turning around is heard

CANARY: You are now.

RAVEN: …Can't argue with that.

CANARY: And *one* definitely not rabid bird – aka. Siren!

OWL: Yes, but Siren can't introduce me, can she.

Siren tweets happily

CANARY: You've been introduced.

OWL: It seems I have.

PRESENT MIC: *And what about me?*

OWL: Oh – and *one* English teacher who didn't actually teach us any English last Friday.

PRESENT MIC: NO ONE TOLD ME CANARY HAD ALREADY HAD HIS SURGERY!

The three hero students splutter into laughter

PRESENT MIC: THAT WAS UNFAIR ON MY POOR OLD SOUL!

CANARY: You're not *old.*

PRESENT MIC: *AND* moving on from that topic –

Owl and Raven laugh harder

PRESENT MIC: – I think an explanation is in order for those who are *out of the loop!*

CANARY: O-Oh, yes, probably.

PRESENT MIC: Canary's been out of the picture for the last month or so because of an incident that you can get *all* the released information about on our website! He suffered an injury that seriously hindered his speech! However, after weeks of *amazing* treatment, and a final, miraculous surgery – here we are!

CANARY: I – um – yeah – here we a-are!

OWL: We're here because Canary hasn't spoken at all for like, a month, and his *poor voice* still hurts.

CANARY: I-I'm fine!

RAVEN: You resorted to sign language again this morning.

CANARY: I was tired!

OWL: You still haven't tried to use your Quirk yet – *because* your voice hurts.

CANARY: I-I –

PRESENT MIC: YOU KNOW WHAT WE HAVEN'T DONE YET?

OWL & RAVEN: What?

OWL: JINX

RAVEN: F –

OWL: You can't speak; you're jinxed.

Distant, muffled screaming

PRESENT MIC: CANARY – FACT TIME!

CANARY: Oh, right! Um…

OWL: …*I thought he prepared these?*

PRESENT MIC: *I've been trying to get him to do that but he keeps forgetting –*

CANARY: Did you know that the word jinx probably comes from a bird name?

PRESENT MIC: Excuse me *what?*

CANARY: Uh huh! The wryneck.

OWL: But, um, what does that have to do with the word jinx?

CANARY: Because its scientific name is *Jynx* – and the wryneck is a bird associated with witchcraft – so spells and then… jinxes!

OWL: …Ok, that's really cool.

PRESENT MIC: How… how do you manage to store all that stuff in that head of yours?

OWL: I know right? And I'm sure Raven would agree with us if he wasn't –

RAVEN: HA!

Owl hits the table

OWL: DAMNIT – *ow…*

PRESENT MIC: Wait, what just happened?

RAVEN: You're released from a jinx when someone says your name.

PRESENT MIC: *OOH – Now* I understand.

OWL: Wait, why were wrynecks used in witchcraft?

CANARY: Oh, because they can hiss like a snake and twist their necks all weird.

RAVEN: They can *what?*

CANARY: Like a snake – you know – *hiss*…

They laugh loudly

RAVEN: *Hisss* –

PRESENT MIC: Hey, hey –

OWL: – *hiss!*

PRESENT MIC: STOP HISSING!

They all hiss and burst into laughter

PRESENT MIC: You know what? I think it's time for a long-awaited edition of a Canary Questionnaire!

RAVEN: Wasn't that already a Canary Questionnaire?

PRESENT MIC: *No* – as in, time to add to our number, *one* luck listener!

RAVEN: Oh, goody.

OWL: Well, that was *enthusiastic.*

CANARY: Stop being so sarcastic!

The dial tone is heard as Siren sings alongside it

PRESENT MIC: I'm RINGING!

CANARY: Again, if we're ringing *them* – why do we hear a ringtone?

PRESENT MIC: STOP QUESTIONING IT!

OWL: Because Siren likes it.

RAVEN: You can't argue with that logic.

LISTENER: Um, hello?

PRESENT MIC: *YEAH! WELCOME* to Put Your Hands Up Radio! You're *live* on Canary's Hour!

Listener screams

RAVEN: Siren, no –

Siren screams

RAVEN: I *knew* that was going to happen…

LISTENER: HI, IT'S ME, MEGUMI!

CANARY: Oh, wait! M-Megumi?!

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: DANCER MEGUMI WITH THE SCARY FLEXIBILITY QUIRK – THAT'S ME!

PRESENT MIC: *You don't have to shout into the microphone you're good; we can hear you.*

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: Oh, *sorryyy*…

RAVEN: Don't be hypocritical

Owl snorts

PRESENT MIC: ANYWAY – I get the feeling that you know Canary!

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: That's right! We used to have dance class together, remember?!

CANARY: O-Oh, um, yeah! Of course!

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: And then you *quit* right after that one lesson after the Sports Festival!

CANARY: Ha, ha… yeah…

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: Aw, I'm so happy to hear from you again! People knew that *I* knew *you* and they kept asking me if I'd heard from you and *obviously not* but yay! You're back!

CANARY: *Y-Yay*…

PRESENT MIC: Come on then, Megumi! Do you have a question for us?!

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: Um, yeah! Sure!

PRESENT MIC: Well, we're *all ears!*

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: So, it's actually for all three of you – actually!

RAVEN: Actually, actually.

OWL: Wait, like, me, Raven and Canary?

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: Yeah! Well, do you think that you three, and the others – Puffin, Dove and Crane – like, the *Aria squad* – do you think you'll be like, a hero team once you all become heroes?

RAVEN: Not me.

OWL: Well, *that* was fast.

RAVEN: Oh, you all know why – incompatibility and all that.

OWL: Yeah, yeah – of course. But I personally wouldn't be surprised if Canary and I hung out from time to time – r-right?

CANARY: O-Oh, yeah! S-Sure! I haven't r-really thought about it much, honestly. The other three are a-also really strong on their own, so I don't know.

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: Wow, there's so much to think about with hero work! Oh, and I have another question – are you coming back to dance?!

CANARY: I-I – um – maybe, I don't know, we'll see.

RAVEN: *He's not really allowed out of UA so probably not.*

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: *Yeah, that's what I thought – he's just too nice to admit it.*

CANARY: I can hear you even though you're whispering, you know!

PRESENT MIC: Well then, Megumi! Do you have a song suggestion before you say goodbye?!

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: Err… Anything Owl says, because she has a *really* good taste in music.

OWL: I *actually* love you.

** Listener laughs manically**

PRESENT MIC: Then the decision's up to Owl! Thanks for calling, Megumi!

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: And thanks for coming back, Canary!

CANARY: Nice to hear from you.

LISTENER {MEGUMI}: Ha, ha – more you than me!

PRESENT MIC: *Aaannnddd* – it's seven twenty-eight!

OWL: Oh, wait, really?!

CANARY: I – *cough* – I keep forgetting how quickly this goes – *ahhh!*

RAVEN: Time to put Canary to bed.

Canary tries replying but ends up squeaking instead

PRESENT MIC: And I agree! That's it from us in Canary's Hour! Unless something happens – we're scheduled to *return* in a couple of days on *Thursday!*

RAVEN: And Canary's a full-on villain magnet, so don't keep your hopes up – *ow!*

OWL: Canary just punched him in the shoulder if you're wondering what happened there.

PRESENT MIC: Time to say our goodbyes before we get cut off at seven thirty!

OWL: Oh, right – bye!

PRESENT MIC: Stay tuned, listeners! And *remember* – our *hero hotline* is here for you 24 hours a day – seven days a week! If you need help – or someone to talk to – we'll be here to offer our assistance! And *what* is that number…?!

OWL: Five-five-five-o-one-one-nine!

PRESENT MIC: *And* one more repeat!

RAVEN: Five-five-five-o-one-one-nine.

PRESENT MIC: *YYYEEEAAAHHH!* This is *Present Mic!* Stay tuned and see you soon!

OWL: This is Owl, signing off for the foreseeable future!

RAVEN: This is Raven – looking forward to attempting sleep!

Siren tweets loudly into the microphone

RAVEN: *Ouch* – Siren, that was *loud* –

CANARY: A-And this is C-Canary! Thank you f-for listening and – *cough* – good*bye!*

Chapter End Notes

IT'S A QUARTER PAST MIDNIGHT – AND THE SIRENS ARE MENDING SOME HEARTS – BUT I'M THE LOSER ON THE BACK SEAT BECAUSE THIS CHAPTER'S BEEN TEARING ME APART

IT'S A QUARTER PAST MIDNIGHT – STILL AVOIDING TOMORROW

IT'S A QUARTER PAST MIDNIGHT – AND I'VE LITERALLY JUST FINISHEDDDD

I NEED SLEEP.

Thank you to **Del_la_sol** for the question used in the radio segment! Yes, I really *do* have a list of all the questions suggested, and I still look back at them.

The Art Section!

littlemusic…meiyou *actually* completes their Aria collection with Puffin! And they've also got a beautiful drawing of Midoriya singing to Eri!

Thelovypop17 has drawn a really cool doodle of Midoriya in the bathroom after he was healed! (slight trigger warning for blood)

Then cat1dog did a doodle of Kaminari doing the crab walk XD

101 doesn't have a drawing this time because they're really sick – so send your love and maybe they'll be well come Christmas day : (

It Was All Going So Well

Chapter Notes

> It's 11:46pm on the day before posting. I have just finished – I wrote this entire chapter in the span of a few hours because I've been too busy this week and I'm really behind. Anyways – I'm off on holiday tomorrow – we're taking an aeroplane this time, so the travel time won't be like, two days, as with last time, and I'm pretty sure I'll be on time for my next upload. And… hopefully it won't be this last minute. My upload schedule says that will be for the…. 3rd of January! So… Happy New Year! See you in 2020.
>
> If you have 2020 vision.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The radio disintegrated at his touch. The ash was chucked off the table and sent billowing across the room. Toga coughed daintily, wafting the dusty air from her face and pinching her nose. "Was that really necessary?" she pouted, "I was *listening!"*

"*This wasn't the plan,"* Shigaraki *seethed*. His deadly fingers twitched in anger; his red eyes fixed on the place where the radio had been.

"I'm not sorry – it's all my fault!" Twice whined from a corner, pulling at his mask. Toga skipped towards him absentmindedly; *someone* needed to make sure he kept it together. "If I hadn't taken that *stupid* Overhaul to the warehouse, Big Sis Magne would still be here –" his frenzied eyes flicked towards her support item, the large magnet that they'd soon leave behind. It was too bulky to drag around the place all the time, and Kurogiri had been off busy somewhere for a while. "– Compress would still have both his arms – Canary would never have had the chance to fly off and everything would still b-be –"

"I need you to work with Overhaul," Shigaraki interrupted.

They *stared*.

“Are you *crazy?!”* Twice yelled. “What are ya playing at, huh?! Working for *that* man?!”

“We’re running out of options,” he snapped. “Canary is no longer an asset – but a *problem.* Not only to us, but to the Yakuza too. They no longer have that girl – Eri. They need her; it must be something to do with those bullets. In exchange for help and information, they asked for three players, you, Toga, and Kurogiri. I managed to hold onto him – but the two of you have to play along.”

“No way! Come on Toga – what do you think?!”

Toga narrowed her eyes. She stood upright, glancing at her reflection in a knife she pulled from her sleeve. “I think… The League is about me being as free as… *Canary*,” she pondered, dancing around the room, “Free to be who I am without society’s chains…” Now by Shigaraki, she stopped, thrusting the blade through the air so it nearly skimmed his cheek. She gazed at the eyes beneath the dismembered hand. “Why must you tie me down again?”

But then he did something so simple, that she couldn’t have possibly predicted it.

He took off the hand, revealing the entirety of his face, and he smiled, “I trust you – both of you.”

Toga slowly took the knife away, gazing at him with her mouth slightly agape.

“In your hands is the future of the League. The Yakuza want to keep us in check, so they’ll try to win the two of you over, little by little. But I want you to *infiltrate* them. We’ll make sure they pay for what they did – like you want, Twice. And you, Toga – will get to see your favourite little birds again.”

“Um, Canary?” Jiro asked hesitantly, tapping him on his shoulder.

Canary blinked up from his drawing – it was very good. It was of Siren in flight; it looked like she was flying right off the page.

“That’s amazing,” she gaped.

Canary blushed a little, “Thank you,” he mumbled, putting down his pencil and turning to face her properly.

The plaster had been removed from the side of his face now. Recovery Girl said that she was surprised that it still scared, despite her being about to heal it with her Quirk so much quicker than before. Canary reckoned it was a fallback of his Quirk, since the damage was dealt when he was using *Titanium*, and quite literally cracked the metal at a low point in the song’s power.

Jiro tried not to look at that either as she sat down next to him. They were in the common room, early morning before homeroom. “There’s… something I really need to tell you.”

Canary frowned. Whatever he’d been expecting her to say, it clearly wasn’t that.

“I-I um…” she stammered, fiddling with her earphone jacks nervously. “You see – the day you got your voice back – that morning, actually, Aozora rung me up.”

His expression didn’t change as he cocked his head to one side.

“Err… Well, it had been a *while* since anything happened on the radio show and… well, she *kind* of suggested –”

“That you went on instead of me?”

Jiro blinked at him, “W-What?”

He smiled softly, “I figured that would be the plan eventually, but I didn’t realise it had already been raised as a suggestion.”

“*O-Oh…”* Jiro nodded, “Yeah – I, um – yeah.”

“So, what’s happening with it now?” he questioned.

Jiro took a deep breath and sighed, “Sorry, I thought you’d be a lot more upset than this.”

“Why would I be upset?” he frowned again. “Well, I would have preferred if you told me a little sooner, but we all have secrets that we’d rather not spill, especially in fear that we’d hurt someone else in the process.”

Jiro gulped. Yep, he was still a *little* salty about that. “Yeah… sorry – I just didn’t know how to… start.”

Canary shrugged, picking up his pencil and shading his drawing idly, “I’m not very good with words either.”

She bit her lip, “No… I think you are.”

“I-I am?”

“Yeah. You… *think* about what you’re going to say, because you know how important words can be…”

He huffed, “Well, it depends on what mood I’m in.”

Jiro laughed, “I guess that’s the same for all of us! But, um, anyway – with the radio show. It doesn’t matter anymore; it’s your thing, I just thought I’d properly explain everything,” she said, standing up slinging her bag over her shoulder and hurrying away to go to morning registration.

But moments later, on her way over to the main building, Canary skidded up beside her, huffing and puffing, with Siren doing loops around him like a rocket, “I-I hadn’t finished talking to you!” he exclaimed, “You ran off before I could!”

“Wait, you weren’t?!” she replied, “Ah – Sorry!”

He sighed, “Anyway – can’t you still come on the radio show?”

“Um, yeah, when you invite me to come on, like Shinso, right?” she frowned.

“Well, yes,” he nodded. “But, I mean – why not like, you coming on every other week or every Thursday o-or – or something regular! T-There’s only so much I can talk about anyway and as I said I’m not very *good* with talking and it’s only been one show since it started back up again and I don’t really know what’s –”

“Woah, hey, wait – slow down!” Jiro laughed nervously, “Scratch what I said last – you don’t really have much of a brain to mouth filter, do you?”

“U-Um… Well, I-I – I don’t know I guess I’m so used to the filter being so s-strong that nothing comes out at all t-that I’m kind of struggling maintaining what’s left behind… If that makes any sense at all.”

“No, it does!”

“Ok, that’s good – but yeah, do you… *want* to come on the radio show more often?”

Jiro wavered, “Err, *yes?!* Why wouldn’t I? Wait, you really mean it?!”

He seemed a little stunned by her enthusiasm. “Y-Yes! I mean, that’s just me – you’d have to talk to Aozora about it, but I’m sure it would be fine!”

Jiro *beamed*, “Oh my God – this is going to be so cool – just you wait, Canary!”

“So, what do you guys know already about work studies?!”

They were in the hall where Midoriya had first used his wings. Standing before them, was *not* Mr Aizawa, but none other than *Mirio*, that hero student that Midoriya had vaguely spoken to a few days ago, the morning he awoke with his jaw still fully intact after the little incident with Eri the night before.

But thinking about this *work study* thing, well, Midoriya already *had* one – offered to him by Present Mic. Not that he really knew what it *was*… He just assumed it was like an upgraded internship, since most of them had their provisional licences by this point. Well, excluding Todoroki and Kacchan… speaking of which – Midoriya had to go to that special course session… thing – with them that afternoon – that was going to be *fun*…

“Not a lot then, huh?” Mirio assumed after nobody answered his question. “Well, that’s why we’re here! To show you lot what it means to have a work study – which is why you’re all going to fight me!”

Ah, yes – that was what the third-year had informed them back up in their classroom. Todoroki and Kacchan were both standing out beside Mr Aizawa (who had Siren quarantined to his shoulder to stop her from pecking someone’s eyes out) and the other two members of UA’s so-called *Big Three*.

“Is this really a good idea?” was what Midoriya expected some of his

classmates to say, but no – that came from the third-year girl, Nejire.

“You don’t want to put some of them in hospital, Mirio,” droned the nervous looking Amajiki, who Midoriya felt like he could relate to on a spiritual level. Although that comment about being out in *hospital* did make Midoriya and the rest of his class feel a *tad* bit more worried about this whole ordeal.

“This is the legendary class 1-A!” Mirio laughed, waving his comment off. “But anyway – you guys can just… come at me whenever and *however* you want!”

They all stared. This was *not* how Midoriya was expecting to spend his morning.

It was Kirishima who charged forwards first, yelling a battle cry with his Quirk ready to fight. Midoriya stood well back, beside Shinso, and observed from a distance.

“Analysis?” Shinso whispered to him.

As Mirio’s Quirk activated and Shinso’s expression dropped, Midoriya smirked. “Did you watch his Sports Festival?”

“N-No?” he stammered, *staring* as the battle begun. Mirio cut down their classmates with ease, smiling all the while as every attack missed its mark.

Midoriya narrowed his eyes, fingers picking at his lips as he watched.

“I suppose I should start with the long-range ones, eh?!” he exclaimed, whilst he, butt-naked – just *appeared* behind Jiro, on the other side of the hall.

“He’s slipping through things,” Midoriya muttered, wincing slightly as his friends were battered and bruised. “Is he moving matter away from him? No – that would be dangerous when moving *through* people. It must be his own skin which moves through something else.”

“Well, that doesn’t explain the *teleportation!”* Shinso exclaimed, taking a step back in fear.

No, it *couldn’t* be teleportation… then, what was it?

And then Mirio slipped back through the ground again, avoiding Iida’s advances, only to pop up right behind him and render Midoriya’s

friend immobile.

“He’s attacking us one at a time – we need to advance all at once,” Midoriya concluded. He didn’t have time to think about all the possibilities right now.

“You do your thing then,” said Shinso, before hesitating and turning back to Midoriya. “Wait, have you actually *used* your Quirk at *all* since… well, the summer camp?”

“…Nope,” he replied, popping the p.

“Well, good luck,” Shinso sighed. He visibly braced himself and charged forwards, yelling obscure questions at Mirio in the hopes of activating his Quirk, all the while, convincing the others to follow Midoriya’s quickly formed battle strategy.

But Midoriya hung back; he had to figure how what Mirio was doing…

It was as the last of his classmates were taken down, Midoriya came to a confident result. Slipping through the ground – that was definitely a factor. He must have been moving around underneath them, and then popping back up again in unexpected places, feigning teleportation!

“Just you and me then, Canary!” Mirio beamed, “Give it your best shot!” – and then he disappeared.

There was no way Mirio could see what was going on above him whilst moving underground, so, if Midoriya quickly moved backwards, it was most likely that Mirio would follow his pattern of bursting up behind his opponents to strike, but this time, his estimations would be off.

Midoriya flipped backwards and tossing all insecurities of his Quirk to the wind, he sang the first thing that popped into his head, as suddenly as Mirio himself appeared.

~Stronger – Kelly Clarkson~

“*What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger!”*

And Midoriya propelled himself forwards.

Mirio turned as he flew up from the ground, confusion etched on his face – but he hadn't even made contact with the green of Midoriya's eyes before his fist met his face.

He was thrown across the hall, sliding across the hard ground just before the groaning forms of his fallen friends. There was a trickle of red pouring from his nose.

"*What doesn't kill you makes a fighter –"*

Mirio fell back through the floor before Midoriya could reach him. Quickly – he moved across the hall again – hopping over the others – trying to ignore the piercing stares of all those who watched.

"– Doesn't mean I'm over 'cause you're gone –"

He leapt out again near to where Midoriya had been. From the ground beneath his feet, Midoriya grasped a piece of rubble that someone had left in their wake, and with whatever force his Quirk was giving him, tossed it at the back of Mirio's head.

"Stronger!"

It went straight through –

"*– Stronger…"*

And suddenly he was right in front of Midoriya.

The latter crossed his arms in a defence position, holding his stance firm as Mirio aimed for the head. It was the *strangest* sensation when he went right through.

He continued to sing regardless, and swung out widely, "*– makes you stronger!"*

Midoriya *must* have punched Mirio in the stomach. The older student grasped the back of Midoriya's top to hold him steady, sending them *both* skidding across the hall.

"*Doesn't mean I'm –"*

Bewildered, Midoriya was hit square in the jaw, stopping the music in his head abruptly as his back slammed against the concrete wall, and he fell to the ground.

“Wow!” Mirio exclaimed, panting as he pinched his nose, ignoring the red that continued to gush from it. “That was *amazing!”*

Midoriya coughed and wheezed as someone grabbed his arm and pulled him to his feet. That someone ended up being Todoroki, who hadn’t taken part in the event at all.

“Are you ok?” he asked.

Midoriya reached up to run his fingers along the scars that Stain left. Other than what was bound to become a bit of a bruise, there was no damage, so, he nodded.

He stammered forwards to group with the rest of them, who seemed far worse off, all clutching their stomachs in obvious agony.

“So, what did you think?” Mirio beamed, “Was my Quirk strong?”

“Too strong!” Mina yelled, “It’s so unfair!”

“Yeah – you can phase and teleport too?!” Sero exclaimed.

“Nope – I only have one Quirk!” Mirio beamed, buttoning up the jacket that he’d abandoned during the fight.

“He sinks through the ground and then moves around unseen,” Midoriya informed her.

The three third years blinked at him.

“Huh, yeah – pretty much,” Mirio replied. “That’s awesome! You realised that from only one fight?!”

Midoriya gave him a wobbly smile and laughed sheepishly, “U-Um – yeah… W-Well I’ve seen you o-on the Sports Festival before, so I –”

“Oh! You’re like, super *duper* smart, aren’t you?!” bounced airheaded Nejire, holding Siren in her cupped hands. “Present Mic said in your Sports Festival that you’re like, the top, *top,* of General Studies – and *now* you’re in the hero course like the rest of us!”

“U-Um…”

“Anyway!” Mirio exclaimed, “You were almost spot on! I can use my Quirk to sink down through the ground. Only problem is, once I’m

under there, everything passes through me! Air, sound, light – you name it! But since matter doesn't like overlapping, I get catapulted out whenever I turn my Quirk off! If I angle myself right, I get shot to different parts of the hall – which was what *you* called teleportation!"

"That sounds like it can be super tricky…" acknowledged Asui.

"Sure is!" the older boy nodded. "To get anywhere with *my* Quirk – I have to be faster than my surroundings! It's all about *prediction* – and to be good at predictions – you need experience! Just like Canary here!"

Midoriya ran his hand through his hair nervously, smiling meekly.

"In work studies, you're not treated like an intern – more like an actual sidekick for the pros! It's an experience you can't get in school – and with that experience, I was able to cultivate my power and climb to the very top! And you can do that too; it's an opportunity you *don't* want to miss out on!"

The class gave him an enthusiastic round of applause. Meanwhile, Shinso leant over towards Midoriya, "So, you thinking of doing something like this?"

"Oh, yeah – I've already got one."

Shinso did a double take, "Wait, *what?"*

Midoriya nodded, still clapping alongside the others, "Present Mic offered me one before I got my voice back. Come to think of it, it might have been because they were offering a place on the radio to Owl and they felt bad…"

Shinso narrowed his eyes, "And why do I not know anything about this?"

Midoriya shrugged. Mirio and Mr Aizawa were talking to them all about missing classwork because of said work studies, potentially resulting in them falling behind, so they'd have to work extra hard.

Shinso hesitated, before saying, "If Static's looking for someone to work alongside him still –"

Midoriya grinned slyly, "I still haven't decided if I like you again yet."

Shinso laughed, "Wow – thanks – I feel loved."

“Definitely.”

They all yelled a thank you to the top hero students in the school. But as they waved goodbye, Mirio called back, “Hey, Canary! If you ever need a training partner, come say hi!”

As soon as they were gone, Mina turned around on her heel and pointed at Midoriya accusingly, “STOP BEING SO GOOD AT EVERYTHING!”

“*Yeah,”* chuckled Jiro. “Give us ordinary hero students a shot.”

Shinso leant on Midoriya’s shoulder, “Oh, I’m sorry – is our General Studies flair too good for you?”

“Oh, shut up,” Jiro rolled her eyes, “You didn’t even *do* anything.”

“I tried.”

“And *failed – miserably.”*

“So did you!”

“Go and get changed,” Mr Aizawa interrupted with a sigh. “You have maths first. I’ll see you in PE later.”

That was when Midoriya realised that his teacher didn’t have Siren anymore, “Hey – where’s Siren?” he pouted.

“That Nejire girl must still have her,” Shinso suggested as they all began to walk back over to the changing rooms.

Midoriya just shrugged, Siren could take care of herself – she was bound to reappear halfway through maths and cause a ruckus or something.

“Anyway,” continued Shinso. “You used your Quirk.”

He blinked – *Oh yeah…* And then he smiled brightly, “I have a Quirk…”

“Well, yes, we established that part.”

Midoriya elbowed him harshly, “Eri’s Quirk can reverse other Quirks out of existence.”

He stared.

Midoriya just walked on ahead, humming softly to himself.

“WOAH WAIT – HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN THIS?!”

“Err, the entire time?”

Shinso ran to catch up, ignoring everyone else’s confused looks. “And you just *jumped in* when her Quirk was going haywire?!”

“…Yes.”

Shinso groaned, “You idiot.”

“I think it all worked out pretty great!”

“By a *fluke,* you reckless *imbecile!”*

They laughed all the way back to school. Well, Midoriya did. Shinso was just concerned for his sanity at this point, but what difference did *that* make.

Yeah, things were looking up!

Siren returned later that afternoon looking *rather* disgruntled and *slightly* chubbier than usual. Midoriya decided to think nothing of it as he tucked her in his blazer pocket and picked up the case containing his hero costume.

After *talking* with Hatsume… Well, he got only one word out before she *screamed* – informed him that ever since she’d heard he was ok again, she’d been *inspired* – and then with a silent, and ignored, plea to Power Loader, Midoriya was forced to endure Hatsume’s excitement as support item after support item was tossed in his direction. But eventually, Midoriya had *finally* collected what he needed, and a little more besides, and for the first time in over a month, picked up his hero costume from the dust covered rack back in class 1-A.

“Come on, we’ll be late,” said Todoroki, who also had his hero costume in hand.

Standing by the door was Kacchan, who glared *daggers* at Midoriya as he pulled on his shoes, and they all wandered outside – because today was the day that Midoriya had to accompany the two of them and attend the remedial licencing course. Whether he would have to repeat this experience, depended completely how the session went. They were missing his afternoon classes, so he would *really* prefer not to do so again.

"YOU'RE LLLAAATTTEEE!" yelled Present Mic as soon as they reached the bus that would be taking them to the course.

"Cockatoo?" Midoriya frowned, an expression that only became worse when he met eyes with the other teacher that would be accompanying them – *All Might.*

Present Mic laughed loudly at the name, "We're leading the group today because Eraser's been called out to help with some event with that err…" he glanced at Midoriya for a second, "Well, that *Yakuza* group."

Oh – *Overhaul.*

"What happened?" Todoroki questioned.

"Just some suspicious activity, that's all!" he answered hurriedly.

Midoriya raised an eyebrow at him, which was something that *none* of them missed.

Present Mic cleared his throat, "*Anyway!* Let's get going! They won't be appreciating your tardiness!"

They were all ushered onto the bus – which was rather large for just the five of them, plus the driver. Todoroki ended up sitting next to Midoriya, but Kacchan opted to sit as far away as humanly possible, right at the back of the bus.

Midoriya sighed – this was going to be a *long* afternoon…

"We'll be watching from above!" Present Mic informed them, about to part ways wit them, alongside All Might, as they entered the building where the course took place. "Do your *BEST!"*

As they left, Todoroki sighed, "My father's here today," he told

Midoriya.

Midoriya blinked at Todoroki's discontented expression, "W-Well, hopefully he doesn't bump into All Might."

"With the look *you* were giving him, I think Father would be a welcome break."

Midoriya winced, "That bad, huh?"

"I imagined that if he tried to talk to you, you would say that you're selectively mute, and walk away."

Midoriya blinked at him for a moment, before bursting into laughter.

"Oh, *shut up!"* hissed Kacchan.

Midoriya opted to ignore him.

"YOOO – IT'S UA!"

"And here's someone *else* I would have preferred not to bump into," groaned Todoroki quietly, whilst, from around the corner, came none other than Shiketsu High.

"Ah – what have we here?!"

Midoriya *stared* – because right before him, was the girl that *Toga* had pretended to be – *Camie.*

"Canary!" Camie gaped, "I'm totes like, your biggest fan! Can I have your contact info, or like, your autograph?!"

Yep, Midoriya was not happy in this situation, no Sir –

"Baldie – this girl wasn't here before, was she?" questioned Kacchan.

"No!" exclaimed… err… Inasa? "And I'm not bald!"

"CAMIE!" yelled the third member of the school, "YOU SHOULDN'T BE ASSOCIATING YOURSELF WITH THE INFERIOR – Oh, hello, Canary."

Ah, that was Shishikura – Midoriya liked him, ok – he could deal with that.

"Didn't you fail in the first half, dumbass?" Kacchan asked with no

tact *at all.*

“I WAS GRANTED PERMISSION TO OBSERVE!” he yelled. “And nice to see you again, Canary.”

“U-Um, you too –”

“I heard your surgery went well – you’re here to get a hero licence, or are you observing, such as myself?”

“Oh, I already have a –”

“I’m going to get changed,” Kacchan grumbled, before turning on his heel and marching down towards where Midoriya *presumed* was the changing rooms.

“We’ll see you later,” Todoroki nodded, and started to follow him.

Unsure of what to do, Midoriya ended up waving goodbye to Shishikura and *Camie*, and taking off after Todoroki. Inasa though, quickly followed, of course, heading towards the boy’s changing rooms too.

Midoriya uncomfortably changed in the corner of the room, whilst Inasa (whose last name turned out to be Yoarashi, but Midoriya had already gotten used to calling him Inasa, so it stayed like that) constantly questioned Todoroki on things like his favourite food and hobbies and all sorts. He seemed to be trying rather hard to become his friend. Todoroki, however, was rather averse towards the idea.

Midoriya was just relishing in the fact that he was *wearing his hero costume again!* He grinned. Like this, he wasn’t just pitiful old Midoriya – no, he was *Canary!*

Canary can be whoever you want him to be – you can be brave and kind and confident! Everything you are and more; everything you know *you can be.*

“Um… today, our number will be growing from ten to twelve,” droned the all too familiar voice of Mera, the hero public safety commission representative that had first green lighted Midoriya for his provisional hero licence. “One will be a permanent edition, and the other will only be here for today, or possibly a few more after that, depending on how today goes… Please – introduce yourselves.”

“You can call me Camie – but my hero name is Ms Illusion!” the girl introduced herself, taking off her cap with a smile. She was standing beside Midoriya, a little apart from the main group, who were all gazing at them curiously. “I’m a second year at Shiketsu High!”

“Err –” interjected Mera, clearing his throat, “She also completed the first stage of the exam, we think… Anyway – as you may have been told, there was some villainous activity going on during the provisional licencing exam… The villain Himiko Toga, a member of the League of Villains, took her likeness, but we don’t know for sure if the *real* Utsushimi completed the first exam, or if it was Toga, considering her memory seems to rather foggy and she was tested positive for narcotics. We are allowing her to participate due to this and her good track record at school.”

Midoriya winced, well *that* was an iffy explanation.

“Toga’s motive seemed to be to attack the other additional member of today’s class,” Mera indicated towards Midoriya, blinking at him and waiting.

“Oh,” Midoriya replied, realising that this was his cue to introduce himself too. “H-Hi – I’m Midoriya – Canary – I don’t mind what you call me – S-Sorry.” *Damnit – you can act more confident than that!*

A few of them gazed at him in some kind of awe – a couple of girls elbowed each other and giggled at some kind of inside joke that seemed to involve him. Midoriya just waved feebly.

“Midoriya did not take part in the exam at all,” Mera explained. “But due to the err… incident – with Toga, which he managed to handle by himself. And his history of being able to successfully manage difficult situations, such as with the Hero Killer and um – well yes. He already has a licence but is here to confirm that the judgement was correctly placed.”

Again, *that* could have been explained better…

“Anyway,” Mera yawned, turning his back and beginning to leave the stadium alongside the other important looking officials, “Over to you, Gang Orca.”

Cue Gang Ocra, *yelling* at them all mercilessly whilst Midoriya just *beamed* because *oh my God it’s Gang Ocra*.

“*You* three are plenty strong in a fight!” he yelled over at Todoroki,

Inasa and Kacchan, “But that’s *all you are.”*

“Jeez, he’s real salty, am I right?” Camie said, leaning over to Midoriya.

He gave her a look, “Err…”

“By the way – sorry for whatever happened back at the exam,” she said. “No idea what happened – you feel me?”

He narrowed his eyes. *What* was she *saying?*

“Just hope we can start afresh!”

Ah, ok – he understood *that*, “Um, yeah – for sure!”

“HEY, QUIT YAPPING!” Gang Ocra yelled at the two of them. “You, girl – you’ll join these three, considering you seem *just* as incompetent.”

She just blinked at him, “Yeah, sure thing, fam.”

“Canary – you will stay with me and the rest!” he ordered, and so, Midoriya scurried back to stand in the row of failed hero students, who continued to stare and whisper.

“I am going to introduce what those four are doing. You lot, wait here!” the hero barked, and stomped towards Midoriya’s friends, leaving him with these total strangers.

“Oh my God – it’s so cool to meet you!” beamed one of them enthusiastically, immediately jumping out of line to talk to him.

Ok – ok – ok – confidence!

“Hi,” he said with a wobbly smile, “I-I’m Midoriya, nice to meet you.”

“I’ve been listening to like, *all* your radio shows,” said another.

“*Aw!* Is that Siren?! Can I see her?!”

“Oh, yeah – sure!” Midoriya grinned, picking her up out of his pocket and handing her over to the hero student.

“Hello, you little devil! Aw, she’s so *cute!”* the girl squealed.

“Hey, I heard you had a surgery to fix your mouth – what happened?”

someone who was not so transfixed by Midoriya's bird, questioned.

"U-Um… well, it *kind* of got partially disintegrated," Midoriya explained, laughing nervously.

"*Disintegrated?!"* one gaped. "*Ouch* – was that a villain or something?"

Midoriya nodded before one of the others pushed their friend away, "Don't ask questions like that! It must be a sensitive subject!" he hissed.

He ignored him, "Are the scars on your cheek from that or the surgery?"

"Oh, this?" Midoriya frowned, running his hand over his cheek. "No, that was Stain."

"*Stain?!* The Hero Killer?!"

"*Oh* – you and that guy Brain Blank took him down, yeah?! That official guy was *right* about you having a good track record. I totally forgot about that."

It was by this point that the doors on the far side of the hall opened, and from it, came *dozens* of screaming, running children.

"…*What?"* frowned one of Midoriya's new group, as Gang Orca explained to the others that they had to *win the hearts* of these children. Their teacher was practically crying when they were finally taken off her shoulders, and escorted to the stands, where –

"Hey, is that Endeavor?" the girl who was holding Siren gaped, blinking up at him, "The number two – one – hero?!"

"What's he doing here?"

"He must be watching Puffin," Midoriya realised with a sympathetic sigh, poor Todoroki.

"*Puffin?!* Wait – the conspiracy guy?!"

Midoriya blinked, pointing back at his friend over his shoulder, "Oh – that's Todoroki."

"As in – the guy I'm following on social media with the ridiculously stupid conspiracies on pro heroes, is the ice-cold *son of Endeavor?!"*

Midoriya just blinked again, “Never judge a book by its cover.”

“Y-Yeah – but still…”

“OK, YOU LOT!” roared Gang Orca, leaving the others to be attacked by merciless five-year-olds. “Let’s get to it.”

Midoriya spent the next half an hour joining in with training with these strangers from other hero schools, all the while thanking the *Goddess* that was Hatsume for her new invention.

It was a modification to his mouth guard. She had probably got the idea after the… *numerous* occasions that villains and well, others – like Mirio – had aimed for his jaw. He needed stronger protection, hence the mouth guard. Before – it had doubled as a speaker, a function which had now changed, because rather than just that, Midoriya could now turn the volume *right* down – and allow the guard to act as a muffler. As long as the song he was using was only to affect him, this *finally* meant that he could sing without worrying about what others think – or without people hearing him when he’d rather be silent.

The *only* downside was that, with no one hearing him, it was kind of hard to work together as a team. And no one knew sign language, which did *not* help matters.

They, very basically, just had to attack any and all of Gang Orca’s team, including himself, in a rather vigorous sparring exercise.

A lot of the kids that the others were… *entertaining* – just watched on in awe. They kept pointing at Midoriya because, to them, it looked like he had multiple Quirks, with the amount of times he’d changed songs. He could already feel the headache coming on.

“CANARY!” Gang Orca suddenly exclaimed.

Midoriya stopped in his tracks, his voice trailing off, although they couldn’t hear it. He had been using his wings to – get the *drop* on his opponents – quite literally – so he was now hovering in the air, trying not to look to excited that he was able to *fly* again, which was probably his favourite thing about his Quirk.

The fighting stopped, and everyone’s attention was brought towards the other side of the stadium. Gang Orca pointed at the *mess* dramatically. “Give them a hand,” he grumbled. “I’ve seen enough out

of your Quirk. And if you weren't using that noise cancelling support item then I'm sure you could take us all out without a problem!" he shouted. Midoriya wasn't sure if he was telling him off for not doing it or complimenting him for his abilities. "But I haven't seen if you're any good with those brats yet."

Midoriya clicked the button which retracted his mouth guard, and let it hang around his neck, "Yes, Sir," he said, and flew over towards the chaos.

Kacchan was chasing the kids around who had stolen his gauntlets, which *couldn't* have been safe. Inasa – well, Midoriya didn't really know *what* Inasa was doing – he was kind of just staring up at Endeavor and All Might whilst being kicked in the shins by the children. Camie looked like she was trying her best, but the feral young girls just… well, *hissed* at her if she got too close. Todoroki was also attempting to communicate with them, which was when Midoriya arrived.

"– It's totally a peepee – and you've got five of 'em – you're the five peepee man!"

Midoriya flew over them and laughed, "Is that your new hero name, Puffin?"

Todoroki looked up at him with the most *done* expression as he held one of his emergency first aid bottles, which have now been dubbed *peepees* by the little kids.

"No – my hero name is –"

"Yeah, yeah, I know," Midoriya smiled, landing beside him.

"Wow – you have wings now!" one of the kids gaped. "You had fire before!"

"I did," Midoriya grinned. Now, kids? Kids, he could deal with.

"I bet my Quirk is stronger than yours!"

"Oh, is it?" Midoriya questioned, trying to seem as shocked as possible. "What's your Quirk then?"

"They're binging balls!" the little boy exclaimed, shooting what looked like a miniature cannon ball with teeth at him immediately.

Midoriya dodged effectively and laughed, “Wow! That was super-fast – you’d make a wonderful hero with a Quirk like that!”

He grinned wildly, “Yeah!” he cried. “Better than you, that’s for sure!”

Midoriya just smiled wider and crouched down to his level, “But, you know – it’s not just the Quirk that makes the hero.”

“Yes it is!” yelled another accusingly, “All the big heroes have super strong Quirks like ours!”

“Yes, but that’s only the heroes you *see,”* Midoriya grinned, holding a finger to his lips like he was letting out a big secret.

The group around him wandered in a little closer, eager to hear about these mysterious heroes.

“Well, of *course* you wouldn’t know about underground heroes – that’s what they’re all about after all, secrecy.”

“What’s an *underground* hero?” gaped a little girl. “Do they live underground?”

“Nope!” Midoriya exclaimed, “But I can see where you get that from. It’s a silly name, really.”

“Yeah!” pouted another. “If they’re not underground – then why are they *called* that!”

“*Exactly*,” Midoriya nodded. “And why call you all just *kids* when you’re *clearly* pretty much heroes all ready.”

“YEAH!” about half of them exclaimed. He was gathering a bit of a crowd now. Some of them were gazing at his wings, melting before their eyes, and picking up the fading feathers from the floor – but at least they’d quit kicking Inasa.

“But anyway – these *underground heroes* are like – super secret. They’re *so* secret, that even the villains don’t know their names.”

“So, they can sneak up on them!” realised a girl with pigtails. “And they won’t know what their powers are, so they can’t prepare for them!”

“Wow! You’re super smart, aren’t you?!” Midoriya exclaimed, making her blush furiously.

“Hey – I know you!” another suddenly realised. “You’re that guy on the radio – Canary!”

“Yep!” he smiled brightly, “That’s me! And this is Siren! Would you like to meet her?”

Todoroki, Inasa, Camie and Kacchan just stared on, defeated, whilst Midoriya very easily calmed the crowd down.

“Why are your wings gone now?!”

“Oh, that’s because I’ve stopped singing,” Midoriya explained as he handed Siren over to a couple of the girls.

“But you weren’t singing earlier!”

“Yes, I was – but my clever mask made it so you couldn’t hear me.”

“That’s *really* clever.”

“It sure is!”

“Oh, *come on!”* yelled Kacchan in frustration. “Why the hell do you like *him?!”*

“Leave Canary alone!” exclaimed the girl who was holding Siren. The bird just looked proud of her newly adopted baby.

“Yeah – Canary’s our friend!”

“You’re just *mean!”*

Midoriya was feeling *really* smug right about now. He had his own mini army and everything.

“They’re better once you get to know them,” Midoriya smiled, standing upright again. “Well, most of them.” He grinned slyly at Kacchan, who looked like he was *literally* about to spontaneously combust.

“I don’t think so.”

Midoriya blinked over at the one boy who hadn’t joined his huddle, leaning casually up against the wall like he owned the place.

“You all think you’re better than us just because you’re a little older!” he said accusingly.

“Why would you think that?” questioned Midoriya sincerely.

“Canary doesn’t think that,” insisted the boy with the cannon ball Quirk. “That’s just the other meanies.”

“We don’t think that either,” Todoroki contradicted. “Your Quirks are amazing.”

“Hey, I have an idea,” Camie suddenly piped up. “Stand by – this place could do with a little glamour…”

She turned around and seemed to blow a kiss at the massive structures of ice that Todoroki had left in his wake, morphed into odd shapes by Kacchan’s explosions and Inasa’s wind – all holding the remnants of the kids’ Quirks inside.

Midoriya didn’t have a clue what was going on – but the other four must have conversed earlier and formed a plan, they just needed everyone to calm down a little. Because now, only a few minutes later, was some kind of massive *slide* – held together by their combined powers.

He stood back as the others took over, pulling the children over to their slide, with Inasa powering the dangerous looking ride with his own Quirk.

Midoriya was handed back Siren as the little girl he’d befriended hurried over to join her friends – so much for the mini army, although he reckoned they all still preferred him over the other hero students.

He just stood there and watched for a while, with the children hurrying over to him occasionally to ask questions – or once or twice just to hug him and then run back into the action. Until, eventually, Gang Orca himself trudged over to his side.

“You don’t need to come back here again,” he huffed. “You have the strength *and* the heart of a hero, as well as the experience. Everyone else here could learn a lesson from you.” He cast his gaze over towards the kids, “In fact, I believe they already have.”

Midoriya tried not to smile too widely to that. He didn’t know it was *possible* for Gang Orca to take a shine to someone.

“You can sit out for the rest of the afternoon,” he insisted, turning his back and marching over to the other hero students again, “Present Mic says you have bad Quirk draw back! Makes you *weak* – so toughen

that up for the future!"

He grinned wider, "Yes, Sir!"

"– Now, come on – join the others!"

"No! Unhand me!"

Midoriya blinked over at Kacchan. He had grabbed the wrist of that boy who leant up against the wall, excluding himself.

He was shouting at Kacchan as he dragged his feet, calling him names and informing him how *inferior* he was.

But the Kacchan caught a glimpse of Midoriya staring.

"If you keep looking down at everyone, then you're never going to notice your own weaknesses!" he yelled.

The boy stopped and stared. Midoriya did too.

Kacchan sighed, "Just… join in with the others – stop sticking your nose up in the air. It's no fun for anyone – Hey, Baldy! Take this one for a ride!"

…Huh.

They were walking back to Heights Alliance now. Todoroki kept casting his mind back to how well Canary had dealt with those kids… He was like a totally different person – definitely in his element. There was a certain confidence around him when he was *Canary* – the hero, rather than just Midoriya, hanging out in the dorms or the classroom. Todoroki had started to see it when he came back from the radio station or got into an animated conversation about literally *anything*. His old, timid self was still there, yes – and it would never go away; it was part of him. But this confidence was also *him* – he was just

starting to learn to show it.

Canary was now swinging his hero costume case by his side humming along to the tune in his head happily.

“Would you *shut up?”* seethed Bakugo.

He didn’t stop humming. He was still in that *confident mode* – which meant he didn’t flinch at Bakugo too much. But Todoroki decided that it would be best to position himself in between the two of them anyway, to avoid any conflict. He… hadn’t really seen Canary converse with Bakugo much before. He didn’t plan on being present often when it *did* happen.

“What?!” Bakugo exclaimed when he realised Todoroki was trying to separate them. “What do you think I’m going to do?! Walk behind me – you idiot!”

Canary stopped skipping. He slowed his pace a little, and his humming too, clearly thinking hard about something. Maybe it was about how much Todoroki knew of his situation with Bakugo – ah right, he was still rather mad at Shinso for revealing that information, and understandably so. Todoroki would be *furious* with Canary if he revealed what *he* knew about Todoroki’s relationship with his father.

They reached the door to Heights Alliance, and Midoriya threw it open first, “Hi, we’re back!” he announced happily, kicking off his red shoes as Siren darted in past Todoroki’s head. He had to duck a little to make sure she didn’t slam right into him.

“Oh, hey, Midoriya,” said Shinso, who had been walking past with a cup of replenished coffee. “Oh, and Todoroki’s back – hi.”

Canary grinned at how he completely dismissed Bakugo’s presence.

But then, his friend did a double take, “Bakugo – weren’t you upstairs a second ago?”

They all stopped and stared at him.

“…No?” Bakugo frowned. “We just got back why the *hell* would I be upstairs?”

Iida came into view, “You… and Midoriya – you came back a minute ago, and Todoroki lagged behind to speak to All Might.”

Todoroki exchanged glances with Canary. “No?” he frowned.

Everyone stopped what they were doing and froze, each buried deep in their own thoughts as they tried to get their heads around what just happened.

But then Canary piped up. “You… said both me and Kacchan came back early. If Kacchan went upstairs, where did I go?”

Shinso narrowed his eyes and put his cup on the kitchen counter. He then signed something to Canary. Whatever it was, it made Canary’s eyes widen and breathing quicken.

“Raven… come with me a second,” he instructed, and cautiously started to walk towards the stairs, before hesitating at the bottom. “What floor are you on, Kacchan?”

“What the *hell* is going on?!” he exclaimed.

“JUST TELL ME WHAT FLOOR YOU’RE ON!” Canary *roared.*

It wasn’t only Bakugo who took a few steps back at that. “…Fourth.”

“Thank you.”

And so Canary hurried up the stairs and out of sight, closely followed by a nervous Shinso.

“…What the heck just happened?” questioned Jiro, furrowing her brow as she leant over the sofa.

“I don’t know,” Todoroki replied. “Hey – where *did* Canary go – when Bakugo supposedly went upstairs?”

“Oh,” Jiro blinked, “He went out on a walk with Eri. She said she wanted to hear him sing again.”

“How long ago was this?” questioned Bakugo, who wasn’t who Todoroki was expecting to be very concerned about the matter.

Jiro shrugged, glancing down at her phone, “Like, five minutes ago?”

They couldn’t ask anymore questions, because Canary now appeared back at the bottom of the stairs behind Shinso. He looked… *terrified.*

“Your room’s been ransacked,” Shinso informed Bakugo.

“IT’S BEEN WHAT?!” Bakugo yelled, tossing the large case with his hero costume to the floor as he started towards the stairs. He didn’t get all the way before Canary reached out and stopped him.

“Your window’s also wide open; someone climbed out of it.”

Bakugo took a step back, frowning in bewilderment, “What –”

Canary took a shaky breath, and said, “There was also this,” and he held up a piece of crumpled paper.

Bakugo snatched it off him, unravelled it, and stared. He just looked confused for a second, before his expression morphed into one of absolute horror.

Todoroki wandered over cautiously and caught a glimpse of it over his shoulder.

It was written in smudging red ink – or, what he *assumed* was ink. A big heart, with the words:

Miss you, Izuku!

Love from – your biggest fan!

“…Toga,” Bakugo realised.

And Todoroki *remembered* that name.

“Iida, you need to run to Mr Aizawa,” Canary insisted – dropping the nicknames in the seriousness of the situation.

“He’s out on hero –”

“THEN ANYONE – GET A HERO!” he shouted. “S-Sorry –” he hurried over and handed over the message to Iida. “Tell them it’s Toga – s-she was here.”

“Toga?” Todoroki gaped, “You think she took your likeness to get to Eri? Then how were there two of –”

“Twice,” mumbled Bakugo, “A villain named Twice – bastard can clone people. He could have cloned the vampire chick.”

Canary nodded, “She can morph into people by ingesting their blood… She has a lot of mine – and a lot of Kacchan’s too.”

In the shocked silence that followed, it didn’t take long for Iida to crumple that message up in his fist, hurry towards the door, pull on his shoes, and take off with the speed of his Quirk.

Canary sunk to the floor.

“Midoriya!” Shinso exclaimed, leaping forwards.

He sat on the ground with his head in his hands, “T-They have Eri – *they have Eri…”*

“What the *hell* do they want her for?!” Bakugo questioned – speaking everyone’s minds.

“Overhaul,” Midoriya whimpered, “*They’ll take her back to Overhaul –”*

“Midoriya, I need you to *breathe,”* Shinso instructed, crouching down before him and putting his hands on his shoulders. That was when Todoroki realised Canary was having a full-on panic attack – but he wasn’t listening to anyone.

“T-They’ll take her back! No – *no* – this can’t be happening – it c-*can’t!”*

“Midoriya, can you please answer me?” Shinso questioned, and Todoroki noticed he was trying to activate his Quirk on him.

“That man – that man *he’s evil!”* Canary cried, grabbing Shinso’s shoulders like he held his, sobbing hysterically. “He’s evil – he’s a murderer – a-a monster – he’s –”

“Ok, Midoriya – you’re hyperventilating,” Shinso said, standing up and trying to pull Canary up too. “*Please* – I know it’s hard but panicking like this isn’t going to help. I’m sorry – Midoriya – Midori–*Canary!”*

But then he jumped to his feet, his eyes alight with a frenzied mania. “Y-You don’t know what I’ve seen! H-He uses her Quirk to make bullets – erasing bullets – he *destroys* Quirks – he destroys *people* –”

“Canary, it’s *ok,”* insisted Yaoyorozu, coming into view. “Why don’t you sit down – and we can talk about this.”

But Canary just shook his head and backed away from them all, right

into Todoroki.

He knew it probably wasn't the best way to do it, but Todoroki ended up grasping Canary's shoulders, and pushing him over towards the common area, sitting him down forcefully in an armchair. Uraraka grabbed the nearest blanket and gently draped it around his shoulders. Canary didn't seem to notice.

Shinso sat down on the floor in front of him, on top of a discarded cushion. "If you want to talk, we're –"

"*They were going to give me to him,"* Canary whispered.

The entire class was gathering around now, their casual afternoon so quickly disrupted. Even Bakugo wandered in close in morbid curiosity.

"To… who?" Mina pressed.

"*Overhaul,"* he replied; his hands were shaking terribly; his eyes were glued to the floor in front of Shinso.

"The evil guy?" Shinso affirmed.

Canary just nodded. "T-The day Jiro sang on the radio – about half an hour before – the League of Villains met Overhaul." He was starting to calm down slightly now, still very visibly shaken, and still, well, *shaking*, but no longer hyperventilating, so that was an improvement. "They failed to come to an arrangement. Mainly because Shigaraki's a *bastard* – they're both bastards – they're perfect for each other."

"Is this when you met Eri?" Todoroki asked, but no, that couldn't have been right. Canary had met Eri *whilst* he was escaping – which was when he ran off with her. This was the day *before* he fled.

"N-No," Canary said, confirming Todoroki's suspicions. "This was just Overhaul – and some of his Yakuza. There were – well… their number was diminished by the time they'd left."

That struck a broken chord in more than just Todoroki's heart.

Canary had witnessed a *murder*. And by the sounds of it, more than one.

He sniffed loudly, "To be fair – the League parted with a smaller number too."

"Which one bit the dust?" Bakugo questioned. Everyone stared at him

for asking such a question. He just mouthed *what* at them all.

Canary waved off their concerned stares, “The one with the magnet.”

“Ah, I was hoping for the magician bastard.”

He just shrugged, “He lost an arm.”

Bakugo smirked, “Good.”

But then Canary *snapped.*

“Why the *HELL* WOULD IT BE GOOD?!”

“Woah,” Bakugo frowned, crossing his arms, “Don’t freaking take it out on me – you got Stockholm’s Syndrome or something?”

Canary *stared* at him, “*…NO?!”*

“THEN WHY WOULD YOU CARE ABOUT THEM?!”

“I CARE IF PEOPLE ARE DEAD – WHICH THEY ARE!”

“THEY TRIED TO KILL *US* – and by the looks of it, freaking *trade* you for some kind of peace agreement!”

Canary stormed forwards and grabbed the front of Bakugo’s shirt. The movement made everyone either scurry backwards in panic or hurry *forwards* to try and deescalate the situation.

“THIS IS WHY WE DON’T TALK!” Canary yelled.

“You don’t talk to *ANYONE!”*

“YEAH WELL WHOSE FAULT IS THAT?!”

Bakugo pushed him away, *“Shut up,”* he seethed.

“Canary –” Todoroki attempted, whilst Kirishima took to pulling back Bakugo. “You need to calm –”

“No!” he exclaimed, “Eri’s gone! I will not *calm down!”*

“We don’t know that for sure,” Shinso insisted. “This could all be some big misunderstanding.”

Canary shook his head, tears pricking at his eyes, “I don’t see that happening.”

Shinso looked lost for words, “Be… optimistic.”

He just stared at him, and then sighed, glancing over at Bakugo one last time, before stating, “I’m going for a walk.”

“Wait no, Canary – if a villain’s out there in UA somehow then –” Jiro tried.

Canary ignored her and pulled on his shoes. “*Don’t* try and follow me,” he snapped. “I need some air.”

Siren flew over to him as he opened the door.

“Not now, Siren,” and he slammed it in her face.

They all stood there, dumbstruck, whilst Siren flew over to the nearest window and started pecking at it.

It was all going so well…

Now what?

Chapter End Notes

Flashback to when I finished writing the resurrection of Midoriya’s voice:

Ha, ha – now I have screaming match possibilities!

Yes, there are more to come.

Yes, I probably underestimated my chapter count – again.

No, I don't trust myself to give you an updated one.

Songs used in this chapter:

Stronger – Kelly Clarkson – cover by Sam Tsui and Kurt Schneider

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NjtpfsMWOAI

Thelovypop17 has drawn Canary whistling away! And *then* she also did this and take her amazing description for it too: *'Phoenix is a birb, but yet Midoriya has experienced being reborn metaphorically as he went from big sad to big happy, so take some cool green flames art of Midoriya not giving up and siren helping him look intimidating.'*

Then **Flubi** on archive or **shlapshlap** on Tumblr has done a really beautiful like, cover photo thing for Canary and it's really great I love it!

Next, also on Tumblr because Flubi reminded me to log on for the first time in like a month… There's **thehirosh** with a super cute drawing of Midoriya with his mask on – and Siren tucked into his hood!

And this (trigger warning) was done by Infinitygalixy, which is another depiction of Midoriya's injury (again – super cool)!

This isn't strictly fanart, but I thought I would finally mention it - **The Blind Wanderer** on Tumblr has been doing a cute little reaction series for Canary, with a post like, each chapter since the dreaded chapter 32. It's pretty similar to the good old comment section but I love it and it makes me laugh so yeah XD

The Waiting Game

Chapter Notes

‘The Waiting Game’

Is it the characters waiting for something to happen?

Or is it you, the reader, waiting for me to *get on with the plot?*

Who knows?!

Have a filler chapter –

See the end of the chapter for more notes

That night, the school was on lockdown.

In an emergency meeting, Midoriya stood as far away from the rest of class A as he possibly could, his arms folded and gaze fixed forwards, unperturbed by the way his friends glanced at him with worried, unsure looks. Although, he’d let Siren perch on his shoulder, but he didn’t really feel like talking to anyone – or the bird – whilst he stewed in his thoughts.

After a few hours, it was concluded that two members of the business course, second years, were missing. And then, following intense police activity, and Mr Aizawa having to use his Quirk on the *entirety* of the student body, it was concluded that no more clones of Himiko Toga remained in the premises. She – they – had snuck in using the missing students’ IDs, as well as their likeness, and then transformed into Midoriya and Kacchan to enter Height Alliance without suspicion.

The two students were later found, although it took a lot longer than *anyone* felt comfortable with, and since UA didn’t let their students return to the dorms until the entire place was thoroughly searched, Midoriya found himself sitting down on the grass as the sun set, his head in his hands with an anger that boiled skin deep, bringing tears

to his eyes. But he only let one fall, when the news was broken, that Eri was gone.

"Hey, Canary? Can I ask you a question?" asked Mirio.

The older boy had found Midoriya wandering the grounds early that morning, kicking at the grass where the dew lay. He had been out for a jog, and they now walked together, in what had been a comfortable silence.

"You just did," Midoriya replied.

Mirio laughed, "I suppose so! But another one – after *this* one, that is?"

Midoriya shrugged, "Sure."

"Your Quirk has all *sorts* of capabilities; it's almost like having more than one!"

He shrugged again, "I suppose it can seem like that sometimes."

"Yeah – exactly. So… how do you manage that?"

Midoriya frowned, tearing his gaze away from the empty space before him to meet the eyes of Mirio, "What do you mean?"

He laughed again, rather unsurely this time, as he scratched his head, "How do I put this into words…? How do you… incorporate all those different powers and styles into one?"

"Hm…" Midoriya replied. "I don't know – it just comes naturally I guess…"

"I see…"

"Well – since I can only use one power at a time… and I'm so used to having none at all, it doesn't feel like much of a big deal," he explained, nodding to himself at the patchy answer to such a patchy question. "Why… do you ask? Have you got a secret extra Quirk you're not sure how to use or something?"

Mirio blinked at him for a second, stopping his tracks, until he burst into a laughter *far* more hysterical than earlier. "Well, kind of!"

Midoriya had meant that as a joke, but oh well. "Really? What kind of

Quirk?"

"Well, um, it's… an extension to what I already know – something I've only been able to access recently, now that I'm strong enough."

"Oh, ok," Midoriya said, his brow still furrowed. "Like… something you've always had, but you can only use now that you've passed the threshold of a certain power level…"

"Err, yeah – I suppose that's the most obvious explanation," Mirio replied, seemingly choosing his words carefully.

"How… long have you had it?" Midoriya asked, slightly worried that he was pushing Mirio's limits, asking all these questions.

"Since about the start of the year, actually – not much longer than you've had yours!" he explained as they began to walk again.

"What can it do?"

Mirio grinned, "You're very curious, aren't you?"

"I-I'm sorry!" stammered Midoriya, "I kind of get carried away when talking about Quirks and their capabilities; it's a great interest of mine and –"

"Hey, no! It's perfectly alright! It's just an observation," he laughed again – he did that a lot. "My Quirk… well… I haven't explored all the *capabilities* of it yet. I've been so focused on the power that I had already that it's been kind of hard to incorporate it! But it definitely makes me faster and stronger… I've been able to make other things as permeable as me too, as long as I'm touching them!"

"Then why do your clothes still fall off?"

"Hey! It's hard to manage! And it can have some awful side-effects – and *you* know *all about* Quirk drawbacks!"

It was a welcome distraction, talking about Quirks. Midoriya had always been able to easily apply his mind to that subject, casting it away from everything else that plagued him.

But they couldn't keep chatting forever. Soon enough, they arrived in front of Heights Alliance, where Midoriya could spy the wandering eyes of his classmates within.

"Your radio show's on tonight, isn't it?" Mirio recalled with a sigh.

Midoriya shook his head, “The school didn’t think it would be a good idea for anyone to be moving in and out of UA for a few days; especially *me.”*

“Ah, right yeah, I forgot,” Mirio remembered. “Last night was a bit chaotic, wasn’t it?”

“Hm…”

Mirio blinked at him, “It’s ok to be… well – it’s ok to feel *anything* in response to this, you know? But it wasn’t your fault – it was no one’s fault; it was completely unexpected.”

“That doesn’t mean we shouldn’t have been prepared,” Midoriya said insistently, glaring into the dorms, meeting the gaze of a few of the others who quickly averted their eyes nervously.

“No…” Mirio admitted, “But we can’t be prepared for everything. It’s strange – yesterday, I tried to teach you and your classmates how important predictions are, but it’s the opposite with you.”

Midoriya frowned.

“As in – *you* need to learn that not everything *can* be predicted. The League of Villains joining up with the Shie Hassaikai for one. That’s what heroes are for! To do their best to predict the outcome, and then deal with what comes next, whether it was what they expected, or not.”

He nodded. It was valiant of him to try and make Midoriya feel better about the situation, but it wasn’t really working.

“Well, class starts pretty soon – you should go and get some breakfast!”

“Yeah, thanks,” Midoriya huffed, shoving his hands in his pockets and beginning to wander towards the doors to Heights Alliance.

He didn’t get far before Mirio reached out and pulled him back, “That training opportunity’s still open!” he offered.

Midoriya gave him a meek smile, “I’ll bear it in mind.”

“Yeah! I had an idea about it all too.”

He cocked his head to one side, “Really?”

“Well, you’ve given *me* lots of Quirk advice – it’s only fair that I give you some in return!” Mirio beamed. “And it’s all about predictions again – you ready?”

“Um… I guess?”

“You’re really good at predicting what other people will do – but remember that it goes both ways! The reason that I managed to get to you last time, was because your own movements were too easy to see! Because of your music – everything you do is to a beat. I know exactly when you’re going to punch or block or do anything!”

Midoriya blinked at him; that was a *really* good point. “So… what do I do?”

Mirio grinned – a look that was a *little* more sinister than all his other smiles had been. “Dupe your opponents into *thinking* all your moves are predictable, and then, at just the right moment, strike *off beat.”*

“Like, just before –”

“Yeah, exactly! It would probably be a little difficult to figure out, but if you can crack it, it could be a major advantage!”

Midoriya’s smile wasn’t so fake anymore, “Yeah… thank you!”

“You’re welcome!” he said, finally letting go of Midoriya’s shoulders. “Now –” he pointed dramatically at the dorms – “food time!”

Shinso had never known Midoriya to be truly *frightening.*

It had been a few days since Eri disappeared into the blue. Ever since then, Midoriya seemed to just… *radiate* this aura of *touch me and you die*.

If they didn’t catch up with him quick enough, he’d eat lunch by himself. Any conversations they managed to strike up ended up feeling… *dragged*. His responses were short and snappy, like he’d *really* rather not be speaking to them. But what frustrated Shinso, was that the only person he *did* seem to communicate normally with, was that third-year guy, Mirio. Although, he *did* seem like the type to keep pestering Midoriya until he gave in.

It was Saturday evening. Midoriya had stayed behind after class, at request of Mr Aizawa, who had probably noticed the same signs as Shinso. But regardless, the class had seen this as the perfect opportunity to lug Jiro's instruments out of her room and down into the common area, in a bid to start preparing for their Culture Festival performance, which seemed a little more appealing now that Midoriya could actually speak – since, like (ugh) *Bakugo* said, reminding Midoriya of something that was beyond his reach, i.e. singing and thus his Quirk, was always the biggest downside of the idea. With that out of the window, everyone was far more enthusiastic. Shinso had been hesitant right up until Midoriya had managed to *properly* prove that he could use his Quirk when he fought Mirio. Well, he'd used it on Eri when she was freaking out and everything, but it was kind of hard to tell if that was his *Quirk* calming her down, or if it was simply his voice.

A guitar was thrust into Shinso's arms.

He gave Jiro a look, which she returned with some added eyebrow action, "It's this or dancing with Mina."

Shinso sighed and readjusted his position on his seat, running his fingers over the strings unsurely. He had *absolutely* no idea what he was doing.

"Ok – if we're all happy on the song –" she started.

"Wait," Shinso interjected, "What's the song again?"

"Were you even *listening?!"* she exclaimed.

"No."

"But you –" Jiro sighed. "Never mind. We chose something American since that's Midoriya's style."

"Yes, but what's the –"

"Oh, you'll just have to find out *later,"* she grinned in revenge – bastard. "Anyway – so everyone but the music group will be doing *some* part of the dance – which Mina's heading."

"Yep!" the pink skinned girl exclaimed, "I'm the master choreographer!" she grinned, clearly rather happy at this arrangement.

“I’m going to have to do the singing,” Jiro admitted nervously, “But I think it would be good if a lot of us joined in on like, the chorus – I’ll be the only one with a microphone, so no one else will be very *clearly* heard, but it’ll have a nice effect.”

“Then we’ve got Todoroki, Kirishima, Aoyama, Sero and Uraraka doing some of the special effects!” Mina continued. “But all of you will having dancing parts too – just not quite as much as the others – so no slacking!”

“Yes, Ma’am!” Uraraka saluted with a wide grin, rocking back and forth on her chair beside Asui.

“And doing the music with me are Shinso, Yaoyorozu, Tokoyami and Kaminari…” Jiro counted, “But we don’t have anyone doing the drums – and I don’t think I’d be very good at teaching that, since I’m kind of a novice myself…”

“Hey, wait!” Kaminari suddenly exclaimed, who had just won the long and hard battle of convincing Jiro that he *should* be on the music team, “Bakugo – didn’t you say you had music lessons when you were younger?”

“Wait *what?”* Shinso scoffed, almost dropping the guitar, “*Please* tell me you bumped into Midoriya – *ha, ha!”*

“This is stupid,” Bakugo groaned, turning on his heel to march upstairs, as per fricking usual.

Sero was quick to solve the problem though, “*I* heard the drums are *really hard* – I bet you couldn’t *actually –”*

“Oh *yeah?!”* Bakugo retorted, sliding into the little stool set up behind the drum set and *immediately* proving that he was more than worth the effort of dealing with. He *had* to be their drum-man. Shinso was already grinning at the thought of Midoriya seeing him doing it up on the stage.

“Alright,” Jiro nodded, clearly pleased by the result, “All the teams are set out, so now we just need to try and sort out the times to practise without Midoriya figuring out –”

That was when their alarm bell – also known as Siren – went off.

There was a moment of silence before absolute *panic*. Midoriya was walking back to the dorms and they had all these bulky instruments

set up there for all to see.

Uraraka was now floating the various pieces of drum-kit into the open elevator – Shinso's guitar was slid underneath the sofa – and the keyboard was hidden behind the kitchen counter with Sato.

And then Midoriya opened the door.

He narrowed his eyes at them.

Granted, they were all in *rather* odd positions. Like in those comedy movies when someone shouts *everyone act natural!* and then they do *anything but.* Everyone staring at him probably didn't help.

Thankfully, Midoriya decided not to question their insanity as he took off his shoes and cautiously went towards the *stairs*, rather than the elevator, which was also a relief.

When he was out of sight, everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

"He's going to figure it out eventually," whispered Hagakure. "There's no way we'll be able to hide what we're doing for the Culture Festival forever – I don't think he even knows what the Culture Festival *is* yet!"

"Whatever, the longer we can keep it hidden, the better," concluded Jiro. "And when he asks, we can just say that it'll be a surprise for him so he's not allowed to know."

"Not much of a surprise then," mumbled Kaminari.

"It's better than being dishonest with him!" Iida insisted in his usual, Iida-like fashion.

But not long after, Midoriya hurried *back* down the stairs. He had a few books under his arm, but what caught Shinso's eye, was the distinctive black cover of that notebook that Uraraka had bought him back along – the *Death Note* one.

Shinso frowned, "What are you doing with that?" he asked.

Midoriya paused by the door, his shoes now on and Siren perched on his shoulder. "I could ask you the same question."

Shinso followed his gaze to what was sticking *slightly* out from under his feet – the guitar.

He kicked it out of sight, "No idea what you're talking about."

That got a *smile* out of him – and a worrying one, “Then right back at you.”

And he disappeared.

Shinso leant over the back of the sofa, watching his friend disappear from view. He had taken off at a run towards the end of the path.

He sighed – oh, someone was most *definitely* going to die.

At the end of classes that Saturday afternoon, Mr Aizawa had asked Midoriya to stay behind after class.

The thought of being quizzed pointlessly by his teacher was not *particularly* appealing to Midoriya. He had been looking forward to lesson-free Sunday – a time where he would do *absolutely nothing at all*. The idea of lying face-down on his bed for the next 24 hours straight *was* appealing.

The door swung closed behind the last, dwindling member of class 1-A. Midoriya sat there in his desk, vaguely wondering if Siren had decided that Nejire was worth the pain if it meant she gave her more food – and that was why she’d disappeared so eagerly…

But Mr Aizawa was still staring at him.

Midoriya sighed, “What?”

He just blinked and narrowed his eyes.

Ok, this was getting rather frustrating at this point, “*What?!”*

“I think you know what, Midoriya.”

“…No?” he sighed, realising that he’d been waving his arms about a lot (a habit picked up from excessive use of sign language), so he folded them sheepishly on his desk.

“You’re not acting like yourself,” Mr Aizawa explained, getting to his feet and walking over to Midoriya’s desk, where he crouched down

beside him. “And I get a feeling it’s because you’re angry about what happened with Eri.”

Midoriya hesitated, honestly, for a moment there, his mind had gone into overdrive and had considered Mr Aizawa was about to accuse him of being a fake – oh, right – his mind *was* constantly reverting back to Toga and the other villains; what they did to Eri.

“I-I…” he stammered, “I don’t know… I – I don’t think I’m *angry…”* he lied to himself.

“You are,” Mr Aizawa affirmed, “but I think you’re not used to the feeling.”

He blinked at him. Was he not… *used* to being angry? Well, that was a rather silly concept – of *course*, he’d been angry like this before…

But then he thought about it a little more, and before the Sports Festival, well, he just *hadn’t* lashed out at *anyone* for *anything*. He’d just accepted it, taking the blows that beat him down – literally and metaphorically – and let himself crumble. Ever since he’d come to UA, he’d had more and more issues with figuring out *how* to react to certain situations. He was fed up with just shrugging them off. Then again, maybe the increased number of incidences was just because he now had actual *friends* to have arguments *with* – and stuff like that.

He must have been thinking about that for a while, being Mr Aizawa suddenly piped up again, “I know the look of someone who’s stewing in negative emotions like anger, regret, guilt…” he explained. “You have to understand that you have done *everything* for Eri. Without you, she never would have been rescued in the first place. Just because Toga had your blood to sneak into UA with, does not put the blame on you, and neither does being absent in that moment.”

“I…” Midoriya started, furrowing his brow as he tried to get his head round it all. “I don’t think that’s why I’m upset,” he admitted, leaning onto the table and resting his chin on his arms. “I… got really scared when I figured out what happened – and I ended up trying to explain to the others why O-Overhaul was so bad – especially to Eri. But I don’t think they understood – specifically Kacchan.”

Mr Aizawa hesitated for a moment, “This is Bakugo, correct?”

Midoriya nodded.

“So, you know him quite well?”

Midoriya had forgotten that it wasn't common knowledge, "We grew up together – same neighbourhood, same schools…"

There was a look on Mr Aizawa's face now, and Midoriya quickly realised that his teacher could soon jump to the conclusions that Shinso correctly reached, way back when. But he gulped down that worry. Trying to deny that Kacchan was ever a problem might just make things worse.

"What did Bakugo say?" he eventually asked, "When you were talking about Overhaul?"

"Um… W-Well – what do you know about –"

"I've read the police reports, Midoriya," Mr Aizawa finished for him. "Not only am I your teacher, but I am on a team investigating the whereabouts of Eri and that Yakuza. Everything you told the officials in your witness statements, I know."

Midoriya gulped, he didn't know that Mr Aizawa knew so much; it made him weirdly uncomfortable. Although, it shouldn't have been much of a surprise. What *did* grasp his attention though, was the mention of some kind of investigation team.

"How's the… investigation going?" Midoriya questioned carefully, sitting more upright in curiosity.

"We'll speak about that in a moment," his teacher insisted. "What did Bakugo say?"

"I-I… well – I can't quite remember, but I think I was trying to explain something about his Quirk. I told them that the League and the Yakuza confronted one another, and less left than had arrived. T-Then Kacchan asked who'd been killed… A-And – I don't know – he seemed rather happy that there *were* fatalities – and then when he quired why I cared at *all*… h-he accused me of having Stockholm Syndrome! Which I do *not!* And then I kind of ended up shouting at him and *oh my God I shouted at Kacchan – again*. Why did I –"

"Midoriya," Mr Aizawa sighed, cutting him off. "I know you're still not used to talking, but you do have to *breathe."*

He blinked at him, "Right… sorry."

"It's ok to lose your temper from time to time," he said with a shrug, standing up straight again and leaning against Midoriya's desk. "It

happens to everyone – and I believe you had a very good reason. But despite how hard it is, bottling up all those emotions is just going to make things worse."

"I-I'm just…" Midoriya trailed off. "I'm really scared for Eri. She must have been really confused when someone who looks and *sounds* like me just took her away, back to the place that frightens her so much that the very *mention* of Overhaul's name on the news made her… *e-explode*."

"Midoriya, we *are* going to get her out," Mr Aizawa insisted, with a look that said – *and if anyone doubts me, they're getting a fist to the face.* "Do you… think there's any more information that you may have forgotten to tell the police, that could possibly help with finding her?"

Midoriya bit his lip, "I-I don't know… But if any of your investigation team has any questions… I'll try my best to answer them."

"We've been investigating known Shie Hassaikai locations to see if we can conclude which one Eri's being held at."

"But the villains who got Eri weren't *part* of the Yakuza," Midoriya insisted. "And when I left, the League and the Yakuza weren't exactly on the best of terms… Maybe some kind of alliance was sorted out after all."

"You said that the place you escaped from with Eri was about an hour away by train," Mr Aizawa recalled. "We've mapped all the locations that could have possibly been, on a route that required no switching of trains. However, not only is there more than one option, but there's a good chance that Chisaki – Overhaul – decided not to stay there, in fear that he would be caught."

"So, you don't know where Overhaul is at all?" frowned Midoriya.

His teacher shook his head. "The Yakuza members that we've interrogated insist that Overhaul isn't in charge of their group, but the elder leader is bed ridden, and *someone* is still in control."

"He probably controls them through fear," Midoriya mumbled.

"That was our thought too. But… well, Midoriya – you've been speaking with Mirio a lot over the past few days, right?"

Midoriya furrowed his brow, where was he going with this?
"Yeah…?"

“Well, Mirio currently has a work study at the agency of the pro hero Sir Nighteye –”

“Wait, really?!” Midoriya bounced, leaping out of his chair for a moment, before chuckling nervously and sitting back down, “Sorry, he just has a really cool Quirk – *and* he used to be All Might’s sidekick…”

“I… thought you weren’t the biggest fan of All Might?”

Midoriya fiddled with his fingers nervously, “What gave you that idea?”

He simply sighed again, “Anyway, their team has been studying the Shie Hassaikai since before you returned. Consequently, they are part of this *investigation* team I keep mentioning.”

“But wait!” Midoriya exclaimed, “Can’t Sir Nighteye use his Quirk to –”

Mr Aizawa waved the suggestion off, “He says the probabilities for success aren’t high enough to put into action yet. He will only use it to *confirm* suspicions.”

Midoriya pouted but decided it would be best not to argue; there had to be a good reason behind his decision.

“*Mirio*,” continued Mr Aizawa, “says that they would benefit from having *you* on board.”

Midoriya’s eyes grew wide.

He noticed Midoriya’s enthusiasm, but decided to move on regardless, “It might be some time yet until we can make a move. But if your input could speed up that time, then *as long as I can keep an eye on you…”* he paused studying Midoriya’s expression for a moment, “… then you can participate.”

“Yes!” Midoriya exclaimed, leaning forwards over his desk, “Yes – please – anything – if I can help then *please* let –”

Mr Aizawa just wandered over towards the door and opened it wide, “We’re having a meeting tomorrow. Six o’clock sharp, outside the dorms. Just a warning – you won’t be the only one coming.”

Midoriya scurried to his feet and nodded, heart pounding. “T-Thank you.”

“Get some rest.”

“Y-Yes, Sir.”

And so, he left.

As he walked back to the dorms, the smile on his face grew wider.

But then he stopped, deep in thought. Maybe… there was an extension of his Quirk that could help with this…

Just like Mirio said, not everything could be predicted, but Midoriya was sure that it *could* be prepared for, regardless.

He would sleep well if he practised his Quirk for a while that evening… And if he was alone – then he could attempt some powers that… well… he’d recorded as being rather out of bounds.

That led him to grab his notebooks from his room – *every* book to do with his Quirk – then run all the way back to the main building to pick some items up from Hatsume, who questioned *nothing* – although Power Loader *did* give him a look.

Well, when someone comes in to see if your prized student has a *Geiger counter* lying around, you’re going to raise an eyebrow – especially when she *does* have one.

“Canary?” frowned Uraraka. “What are you doing? Are you starting a work study today?”

“Kind of,” Midoriya replied, smiling as Siren landed on his shoulder.

Outside Heights Alliance at six o’clock the next morning, he found himself beside Uraraka, Asui and Kirishima. Was this what Mr Aizawa meant by not being alone?

“With Present Mic?” questioned Asui.

“No – well, I will later, but not today.”

Kirishima gave him a look, “Alright then, cryptic. I’m off to the train station for *my* work study. Are you guys coming?”

“Yeah, sure!” Uraraka replied. “What about you, Canary?”

“You’ll all be coming with me,” that was Mr Aizawa, wandering towards them with his hands in his pockets.

“Mr Aizawa?” frowned Asui, “What’s going on, ribbit?”

“You’ll find out when we get there. But I’ll be escorting you there today,” he groaned, like he would much rather *not* be doing exactly that.

And so began a rather long and tense journey to wherever this meeting place was.

Come to think of it, this was the first time Midoriya had been on a train since he got out – and actually… There was a pang in his throat when he realised he was going *back* to that very same train station – to the city he had fled from.

He pulled off his headphones as they walked out of that train station, pausing and gazing around, “Huh,” he said, making the others stop and turn to him. “This place seems familiar…”

His three friends came to the same conclusion as Midoriya very easily. “W-Wait,” started Uraraka, “is this where –”

“We don’t have time for this right now,” Mr Aizawa interrupted, which Midoriya was quite happy for; he didn’t feel like explaining this at the moment; he’d rather keep moving, which was exactly what they did.

It was dark when Midoriya had left this place with Eri. It felt like a lifetime ago now. He didn’t feel *scared* in these streets, but that didn’t stop his eyes from darting to every darkened alleyway they passed, recalling the expression on Overhaul’s face when they last parted ways.

“Hey, Canary!” Mirio waved the group over to him and the other two members of UA’s Big Three, standing outside a sleek looking hero agency.

“This must be super important for us all to be here…” realised Uraraka as she walked over to Nejire alongside Asui; they must have had their work study with her, meaning *Kirishima* must be with Amajiki, which was a rather strange combination. Midoriya knew that the three of them had started work studies, with the first day being on

Friday, but he hadn't been sure who they were *with*.

"Let's get to it," Mr Aizawa nodded. "Mirio – you know your way around."

"Yes, Sir!" he saluted, "Follow me!"

There were a lot of heroes about – big names alongside much smaller ones. But every single one of them did a double take once they saw the UA uniforms, or, more specifically – *Midoriya*.

After a few minutes of milling around, they were all led to a large meeting room on the second floor of the building. Midoriya sat down beside Mirio and Mr Aizawa, catching the eye of none other than Sir Nighteye himself, at the head of the table, as he took his place.

"Let's begin by going over the facts," the voice of the pro hero announced, "Bubble Girl? If you could."

"A-Ah, yes!" exclaimed a blue skinned sick kick, standing to his left. She looked rather a lot like Aozora, but with shorter hair and was… overall, smaller in stature and *presence*. Aozora's voice and personality could fill a whole room with ease. Bubble Girl seemed a bit more timid to begin with, and rather unsure. Midoriya didn't think Aozora would be caught *dead* in an outfit similar to Bubble Girl's though… "As you all know, here at the Nighteye Agency, over the past month or so we have been conducting an independent investigation into the yakuza known as the Shie Hassaikai," she continued, glancing down at the tablet in her arms as she spoke, most likely reading off the screen. "U-Um – this was due to an incident involving a band of thieves called the Reservoir Dogs, but the investigation grew more serious after the return of UA hero student C-Canary –" she glanced over at Midoriya nervously, who made no obvious reaction – "Which gave us proof that something sinister was going on behind the scenes of this group."

She breathed a sigh of relief as the presentation moved on to the control of the other sidekick, at Nighteye's right hand, who introduced himself as Centipeder. He clicked a button on a remote, turning on a large screen behind them. It revealed the backs of two rather familiar people – Overhaul and *Twice*.

"This picture was taken just over two weeks ago," Centipeder explained. "It depicts the young head of the Shie Hassaikai, Kai Chisaki, villain name, Overhaul, and a member of the League of Villains, Jin Bubaigawara, villain name, Twice. Unfortunately, they were very wary of being tailed, and we were unable to track them. But

due to Canary's reports, we were able to identify that there was some conflict between the two groups that evening, resulting in two murders and the loss of one of the villain's arms, Atsuhiro Sako, villain name, Mr Compress. Overhaul was the one who killed a member of the League, Kenji Hikiishi, villain name, Magne, whilst the head of the League of Villains, Tomura Shigaraki, killed an unknown member of the Yakuza, who Overhaul used as a shield."

Midoriya was painfully aware of the stares on the back of his head, as his classmates finally began to understand what he had been through.

"After publicising an arrest warrant for Chisaki, after a little more time for investigation, he disappeared, and we have been unable to locate him," Bubble Girl added.

The exchanging of information continued for some time. Midoriya soon realised that he was the most informed out of everyone there, excluding Nighteye and his agency. Most of their information had come from *him* anyway.

They explained the issues surrounding Eri, her mysterious Quirk and what it had done for Midoriya – as well as the method by which she disappeared from UA. But then they finally got onto something that Midoriya *didn't* know, which was the involvement of *Kirishima*.

As it turns out, at his work study at Fatgum's agency with Amajiki, they had encountered a villain on Friday, who had the possession of a gun which fired bullets that rendered Amajiki's Quirk *useless* for the rest of the day.

Then – on Uraraka's and Asui's first day of the job – a different city, but weirdly enough, same time – two giant villains used Quirk *enhancing* drugs. All of those drugs had been traced back in some way to Hassaikai.

"Is that seriously all the information you have?!" questioned a rather irritated sounding hero, across from Midoriya on the long table that spanned the meeting room.

Nighteye hesitated, pushing his glasses up his nose, before turning slowly to Midoriya.

"Canary," he began, "the police were rather hasty in getting your report from the events of your disappearance. Our records say that you gave this information only two days after your return. Moreover, with the inability to speak and no translator for sign language present,

you wrote everything down. Do you think anything could have slipped your mind? Or is there something you skipped over in your report that you may only consider now to be relevant?"

Midoriya frowned, trying to ignore the way people continued to stare at him. But then he remembered something about them saying that they didn't have solid evidence that Hassaikai were the ones actually developing the drugs, and that it was only a promising sounding theory.

"U-Um," he stammered, and then cleared his throat, turning to Nighteye with a far more determined look on his face. "That warehouse where the League and the Yakuza fought – when those murders happened? Were you able to find it?"

"Yes," the hero nodded. "We found no bodies, but that matches the description of both Shigaraki's and Chisaki's Quirks."

"Well, did you find the remains of any of the bullets?"

Nighteye leant forwards slightly. "Bullets?"

"T-The, um, Quirk destroying bullets," Midoriya gulped.

He hesitated for a moment. "You said that Mr Compress had an arm removed by Overhaul's Quirk. But Compress' ability, upon touching Overhaul, *should* have *compressed* him into a marble-like sphere. Are you suggesting that one of these bullets stopped his Quirk from acting?"

"I'm not suggesting it," Midoriya blinked. "I saw it – a little golden bullet… Did – Did I not… mention that? I thought I did…"

"It doesn't matter now," Nighteye insisted. "What do you know about the bullets?"

But Midoriya's heart was beating a little faster now. "N-No – I definitely wrote about the bullets. Do you have that report… with you? By any chance?"

There was a moment of silence as the sidekicks exchanged glances and Nighteye just narrowed his eyes at him. Then, he looked down at the papers on his desk, and shuffled through them, revealing a narrow file, which he handed over to Mirio, who passed it to Midoriya.

"H-How long ago did you receive this?" Midoriya questioned as he

cautiously opened it and began to flip through.

“Yesterday,” Nighteye answered. “We only had access to incriminating information beforehand, to make up a case for Overhaul and the murders. The police are very careful about what they release. We could only access information on a subject as dangerous as Quirk destroying bullets once the request was processed, in time for this meeting.”

Midoriya turned to the last page of the booklet.

– but it wasn’t there.

“No… there’s a page missing…” he frowned. “T-There’s definitely a –”

“Bubble Girl – who gave you the information from the police station yesterday?” ordered Nighteye immediately.

“I-I can’t remember!” she insisted. “But he showed me his badge! I swear –”

“I believe you,” Nighteye nodded, “I also believe that someone may have called in sick to work this morning, but they are in reality out of action for a different reason.”

“H-Has the page just fallen out? Or did someone purposely remove it?” questioned Bubble Girl. “If so, why would someone tamper with –” started Bubble Girl.

“To slow us down,” Nighteye interjected. “But it doesn’t matter how we missed it at the current moment. Canary – tell us everything you know.”

Midoriya frowned, “But wait – why wasn’t all this put onto the online records as soon as –”

“It probably has,” Mr Aizawa insisted in his dreary, monotone voice. “But having a Quirk destroying drug out there could also destroy society as we know it. The police had to be incredibly careful with this intel, and so haven’t been handing it out to any and all hero agencies who ask for it. Paper can be more secure than emails.”

That sour hero from earlier let out a laugh, “That went well for them then, didn’t it?”

“Canary,” Nighteye repeated.

“R-Right,” Midoriya nodded. “Um, the bullets were definitely used back at the warehouse. One for Magne; one for Compress and another for Shigaraki, but they missed.” He looked up from file to meet the head hero’s eyes.

The whole thing felt like such a stupid mistake. Where was the missing page? It was all stapled together and – ah, yeah – he could just see the torn corner of the final piece of paper, left stubbornly behind. So, someone definitely ripped it out, either on accident or by force, and the latter was seeming more likely. *Then* there was Nighteye’s comment about someone from the police probably being missing this morning… was he implying that *Toga* was involved?

Perhaps the villains hoped the heroes would pity Midoriya, and not involve him in the case. In that situation, Midoriya would never have been able to repeat his report, and the heroes wouldn’t have thought of going back to the police to double check it, since they had the original thing here. That *definitely* would have slowed them down. Perhaps enough to finish their product where they had the equipment and resources, and then go into hiding with Eri, never to be seen again.

“Afterwards,” Midoriya continued, “they explained that the bullets *were* to temporarily remove Quirks, and that they’d been good test subjects for them… but, um – I think this *is* in here – yeah – the Yakuza wanted more money, probably to get enough to develop these drugs… They said that they’d give the League of Villains a few of those bullets a month, in exchange for… well, um, *me.”*

“For *you?”* frowned Nighteye. “From what I’ve been able to read – you *did* say the possibility was there, but never explained. I suppose that information was amongst that which was missing.”

“It was because I was such a big name at the time,” Midoriya explained, heart still beating a little fast for his liking. “If I was in the hands of the Yakuza, they would look impressive to potential investors. And I think the League were considering doing it too – but I escaped the day before they had planned to organise meeting up again.”

“That explains why Himiko Toga and Twice seem to be doing so much of the Yakuza’s dirty work for them,” realised one of the other heroes. “They don’t have Canary anymore, so to get access to the bullets,

they've told two of their members to swap sides for the time being."

"If they're trying to slow us down, then they're clearly trying to buy time!" added Fatgum. "If we know where the girl is then we need to strike as quickly as possible! Any later, and they'll disappear!" he concluded, just as Midoriya had. "They'll take the drugs and build an empire beyond our control!"

"Then where is she?" questioned none other than Ryukyu; she was the number ten hero! If this wasn't such a serious situation, Midoriya *definitely* would have been freaking out.

"it's highly likely that she remains in the Yakuza's strong hold, not far from this very location," Nighteye explained. "However, until we have evidence of this definitely being the case, we can't make our move."

He turned to Centipeder with a wave of his hand to continue the explanation. "We, alongside a few of you in this room, have been investigating other areas of known Hassaikai activity from across Japan. We have managed to rule out a few locations, but there are still quite a few to go."

"Now that you all know what is at stake," said Sir Nighteye, folding his hands on the table before him, "We can employ as many of you as possible to search other areas, in the hopes of narrowing down the possibilities. We at this agency, will continue to keep our eyes on the stronghold, in hopes of proving or disproving that Eri is there.

"As soon as we have the slightest bit of evidence, we'll let you know."

Whilst Mr Aizawa talked to Nighteye a little longer, back in the meeting room, Uraraka sat with her other fellow students of UA, those in his class and the Big Three, outside around a small table. Well, most of them were sat down.

Canary was pacing back and forth, muttering to himself indistinguishably. They had all just been watching him for the past five minutes or so, trying to figure out what he was so deep in thought about.

Eventually, Uraraka couldn't take it any longer. She rose from her chair, pushing it backwards with a loud, squeaking sound that filled the empty room. Canary stopped and looked to her.

She wavered for a moment, before blurting out, "I-I'm sorry!"

He blinked at her like he had no idea what she was talking about, even exchanging glances with the little bird on his shoulder, like she might have more of a clue, "About what?"

"F-For everything you've been through…" she said in almost a whisper. "I feel like we haven't said that enough."

"No one came to save you," added Tsu, who seemed equally as disturbed, and she wasn't even as close a friend to Canary as Uraraka was. "So much happened to you, but in the end, you had to save yourself – and Eri, ribbit."

"It's not right," insisted Kirishima, his fists clenched as he gazed down at the table with gritted teeth, "Whilst we were all having fun and playing board games back at the dorms, you were running for your life! And you risked so much to get Eri out too, even though you didn't really know the truth behind her and everything at the time…." He paused at looked up to him, "You know, you're a real hero, man."

Canary seemed a little shocked by the statement, "T-Thanks…" he replied, quiet as a mouse.

They all stood and sat there in silence for a little while longer, each in their own thoughts.

Soon, Mirio inhaled as if he were about to say something but was quickly interrupted by the arrival of Mr Aizawa.

He walked up to them, looking at each of them in turn for a moment, before resting his gaze on Canary.

"I'm not sure if having you on this case is a good idea," he explained. "All of you."

"What?!" Canary exclaimed, and Kirishima was close behind.

Uraraka fell back into her seat, shocked, "But Sir –"

"You know how serious this all is," their teacher continued. "And especially with you, Midoriya. We can't have you getting caught up in

something like this again."

"But I-I helped!" Canary insisted. "I gave them more information! Sir, you *can't* make me back out! I have to help Eri!"

"I know," Mr Aizawa said solemnly. "Which is why, despite *not thinking this is a good idea,* I will let you participate. I know how much this means to you."

Canary faltered; it looked like he'd stopped breathing for a second. He sighed, bowing his head, as he murmured his thanks.

"For the rest of you," he added, turning to Uraraka, Tsu and Kirishima. "You do not have to continue with this, if you don't want to. There is no shame in backing out."

Now Uraraka was standing up again, knocking her chair even *further* back, almost making it topple over. "After everything we've just heard – there's no way I'm backing out, Sir!"

Tsu nodded eagerly in agreement, as Kirishima stood up too. "If there's even the slightest chance we can help Eri, we're in!"

Mr Aizawa just sighed, "I thought that was what you'd say. Alright – but I'm not letting you out of my sight – *do you hear me?"* he directed that last bit rather specifically at Canary, who balled up his fists and nodded determinedly.

"Alright – let's head back to UA. Your work study leaders will message you as soon as there's any development. Mirio, if you could hand over your contact details to Midoriya, it would be greatly appreciated."

"Of course!" the older student beamed, jumping up, "And don't worry, Canary!" he said, giving him a big thumbs up, "Everything's going to be alright – I just know it!"

And Canary grinned back.

As they all walked back to the train station, Uraraka found herself behind Canary. She couldn't help but think about what it might have been like, all those weeks ago, when he charged through these streets with Eri in his arms, wandering into this very station in the blind hope that there would be a way home for him.

Eri was out there. And she could be painstakingly close by.

They couldn't save Canary –

– she wouldn't let Eri suffer the same fate.

Now, it was just a waiting game.

Chapter End Notes

It's my favourite point of the chapter! The art section!

The first piece is by the wonderful **FiveInBinaryOr101**, which is so dramatically hilarious oh my God I love it so – it's Midoriya vs Mirio! Moreover, they also said that they could make anything look edgy – so here it is XD

Then **yeet_all_the_thots** – remember? That lovely person who came up with the Quirk name! Is back, with some really cute concept art of Aozora! And here's the late Christmas version!

Thelovypop17 is back with some 'casual Canary fan art' – of Midoriya realising that Eri's missing :(

EXTENDED ART SECTION (12/02/21)

This is an amazing drawing by **RisingMoonYue** on Tumblr, depicting Canary's and Eri's escape!

Catch this adorable rendition of the Fireflies scene by **ChaosKatsudon**!

Look at this super cool drawing of Canary - sound of silence - by **grindontfrown** on tiktok!

This is a cool front cover drawn by **aweebitrustyeh** on Tumblr - Canary and a few other stories!

Here's Canary taking flight! By BadAtLifeVA in the Discord!

Canary is included in this art by **arlcn** featuring the characters from **Darken_Raichu**'s story: Deku - Into the Multiverse!

This is Canary singing by Liem on Discord!

Here's a wonderful drawing of Present Mic and Canary at the radio station by pitje_12 on Instagram!

A gorgeous drawing by Anavi from the Discord- it's Canary and Siren, coming for your kneecaps!

This incredibly gorgeous drawing of Canary with his guitar at the beach by constantlyLost on Discord! They also did this super cute drawing of Canary singing in the radio station!

Look at this lovely Sports Festival Canary sketch by Nightshade from the Discord!

Strike Back

Chapter Notes

Are you ready for a heck of a lot of music?

Because *I'm* not.

I tried (am trying) as hard as I can not to repeat too much of the stuff that everyone's read before in this arc – so… yeah… hopefully it's ok. See you on the other side.

Also, I have not finished this chapter as I write this. Is there a cliff-hanger? I don't know – I can't predict the future like Nighteye. But looking at the pattern… there *probably* is so… please don't kill me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Midoriya and the others came back from that work studies meeting… *thing* – later that afternoon, Shinso was once again struck by that shivering fear that ran down his spine, at the sight of his friend's face.

"What… happened?" he questioned with narrowed eyes.

"Can't say!" Midoriya *beamed*.

Why was this scary? Well, Midoriya seemed *happy*. And in the situation overhanging them all over the past few days, that seemed out of character, and… out of place.

And that was *bound* to be *really* bad for *someone*…

Shinso grinned back at him, trying not to seem unnerved, as he

disappeared up the stairs.

“What the *hell* was that?” that was the voice of none other than *Bakugo*, whose red eyes tore themselves away from the space Midoriya had just left and settled on Kirishima.

Kirishima shrugged, “He’s just happy with how things are turning out, man.”

“How *what’s* turning out?!” insisted Mina, putting her hands on her hips and pouting. “It’s got to be something to do with Eri, right?!”

“We already said we can’t say anything,” Tsuyu repeated. “Speculate all you want, but we’re not allowed to speak a word to anyone, ribbit.”

Shinso sighed, washing up his coffee cup carefully, not meeting their gaze as he asked, “So… how long until it’s over?”

They didn’t reply for a moment. Shinso could see them exchange glances from the corner of his eye, until Uraraka piped up, “Soon, hopefully.”

Shinso nodded and returned to his washing up.

The sooner the better.

“Ah! Young Midoriya!”

Oh no, not now – why now?

Midoriya came to a halt, turning around slowly to look upon who had called out to him – All Might.

He was clearly out for a jog, wearing a tracksuit of sorts. It fit him; unlike the baggy clothing he had always worn when he was still pretending to be some kind of unkillable God. Something about him wearing something *fitting* felt… unsettling; Midoriya didn’t know why.

“Good to see you again,” the old hero said, stopping beside him. “How are you?”

Midoriya narrowed his eyes, “Fine…?” He pocketed his phone. He *definitely* hadn’t been staring at the screen for the past few hours – well, *days* – trying to *will* that inevitable message into appearing, that would say *action stations! The waiting is over!* – but no, it wasn’t going to happen quite yet, as it seemed, which resulted in Midoriya wandering the grounds aimlessly; he’d been doing that a lot, recently.

“I heard that you’re working with Mirio and Nighteye on a case,” All Might continued.

“Who did you hear that from?” Midoriya asked out of curiosity.

“Ah, Mirio,” he nodded. “Nighteye and I… still aren’t on the best of terms.”

Midoriya blinked at him, “Did you fall out or something? Is that why he stopped working as your sidekick?”

He chuckled nervously, “Something like that. You know, I’ve been meaning to talk with you for quite some time. This really is fortuitous timing.”

“Hm…” Midoriya said with a thin smile.

All Might sighed and gazed up at the sky. It glowed a heavenly orange with the setting sun. It almost haloed Midoriya’s old idol.

“Kid –” he suddenly said, drawing Midoriya back to reality. He averted his gaze as the hero spoke – “What happened… back then, on that roof top over a year ago –”

He stiffened.

“– I was trying to protect you,” All Might desperately explained. “Yet I see now that not only did I do anything but… I realise you don’t need protecting, not anymore, at least.”

Midoriya gritted his teeth.

“You have proven to me that you can be a hero without a Quirk. You have an *incredible* power – but you don’t need something like that to do what’s right. And what *I* did was wrong – it was as far from protecting you, and as far from heroism, as I could get.”

“I…” Midoriya said, letting the word slip from his mouth. It was strange – how simple it seemed now to let them fall out into reality –

words. Not so long ago, it was a feat beyond his capabilities. The dam that held back his thoughts had been torn down – by those close to him; whose friendship he really could not deal without – and by those who forcefully tried to build it back up again, forming a pressure that the walls could not withstand. But it was times like these when he was reminded that the barrier was still there – barely. It would never *not* be; that he was sure of. It burst from time to time and the words flooded out uncontrollably. But Mr Aizawa said that was ok – and he felt like Present Mic would agree. Midoriya couldn't argue with that.

He looked up to All Might, and let the words flow, "I don't know if I can forgive you," he admitted, blurting out the confession. "I'm… not very good at forgiving, I've realised. A-And I think that's because I used to forgive people *all* the time – forgive them for pushing me around and beating me down and laughing… And now I've used up everything I have… So, thank you for apologising – but I just… I-I *can't."*

To his surprise, All Might smiled, "I understand."

"Y-You d-do?" Midoriya stammered.

"If someone said what I had said to you, to *me,* when I was younger, I think I would be in exactly the same position as you."

Midoriya bit his lip, staring at the ground at his feet as he lowered his head.

"…My Quirk came in late too, you know."

He looked back at him in shock.

"It was far more common to be born Quirkless in my day," All Might sighed, crouching down to his level. "But I had similar problems to you – and similar dreams too."

"T-Then… Then why did you tell me –"

"That you couldn't be a hero?" he smiled sadly. "Because… I tried – without a Quirk. I tried so hard, but until it came to me, I had gotten nowhere. I saw myself in you, and I didn't want you to go through the same hardship."

It… made so much more sense now. It took a weight off Midoriya's shoulders that he didn't even know was there. All Might wasn't looking at him like he was nothing – useless – pointless. He had looked at him, and knew he had to be cruel to be kind.

That didn't mean what he had said was *right.* It didn't mean Midoriya could have or perhaps *should* have forgiven him, despite it all… but it was just that little bit better.

Words… they have such an incredible power.

"But don't forgive me now," All Might insisted, speaking Midoriya's mind as he stood upright again with a great smile on his face, the autumn wind blowing in his hair. "Continue to prove me wrong. Prove that you *can* be a hero – and you don't need me to do it."

Midoriya definitely wasn't seconds away from crying – no – *absolutely* not.

The hero patted him on the shoulder.

"This is only your beginning, Canary."

Bakugo liked to walk around the school grounds from time to time. He would go out for a jog occasionally too, but he'd already done that once today. That didn't mean he couldn't go out for *another*… But screw the excuses; he just needed some peace and quiet for once.

It was now Wednesday. Deku had another thing on the radio yesterday, but the whole thing felt… *eerie*. He was acting like absolutely nothing was wrong and there definitely wasn't some crazed lunatic running around with vials and vials of his and Bakugo's *blood* – transforming into copies of them and doing whatever they pleased. He shuddered at the thought – not that he would admit to it disturbing him.

A lot of things irked him like that recently. It was all… building up.

Deku especially – everything *about* him got on his nerves. Well, that wasn't much of a change, really.

But it was *weird*, having Deku around him in hero lessons. More than weird; it was freaking *annoying*. He shouldn't be there – he should never have gotten there – he shouldn't have that Quirk – nor that *look* when he passed him by… It wasn't the way it was all meant to go.

Not so long ago, it wouldn't have been a farfetched fantasy for Bakugo to be wandering around his old neighbourhood, a good few years in the future, and for that little loser to bump into him with stars in his eyes, like the lost puppy he'd always been. If he could speak by then, he would ask for his autograph and ramble on about some villain Bakugo had faced only the other day and how *cool* he was and… all the usual rubbish. Then they would part ways, and the only reason Bakugo would ever see the nerd again would be because he spied him in the crowds watching his battles or something or another.

That possibility was *long* gone.

At the Sports Festival, Deku had only had his power for a few short weeks. Already, his abilities proved to be a challenge for Bakugo to overcome. It has been a while longer now, and although they hadn't had the chance to face off, Bakugo knew that it would be even *more* of a struggle.

He had the power, the skill – like Bakugo – but he also had something that Bakugo *didn't* have; something he'd never really considered before… *popularity*.

For some, strange reason, people actually *liked* Deku. You type his hero name into the internet and he pops up *everywhere*. It's not just birds there anymore; he's well-known enough to fill up the search results and everything. Bakugo knew because he'd checked.

Regularly.

…Maybe that was part of the problem.

But anyway, with all this daydreaming and wandering about, he soon came to realise that whatever God was out there, *actually* hated him, because he wasn't the *only* one taking some time out from the chaos of the dorms. Sitting under a tree, humming away to himself as he tapped his pen on the side of a hardcovered, black book – was Deku.

His humming ceased immediately as he caught his gaze. Bakugo looked away quickly, shoving his hands in his pockets as he trudged on past.

But Bakugo couldn't get far before that *stupid* little bird – Siren – appeared out of nowhere to hover before Bakugo's face, glaring at him with narrowed, beady eyes.

"Call your freaking bird off, would you?" Bakugo scowled, not looking back at Deku and just glaring back at the canary.

"She does as she pleases," Deku said quietly in response, scribbling away in his book calmly in the background.

"Well, if you want me to be able to *leave* – you better do it. Or else I'll *fry* her."

Deku simply cleared his throat.

Frowning, Bakugo finally turned to meet his gaze. Deku raised an eyebrow and closed the book he was holding, so the cover could be plainly seen. It was titled *Death Note.*

Translation – *fry Siren and I will* murder *you.*

Bakugo rolled his eyes and started to move forwards again, regardless of Siren, but she wasn't having any of it.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed, "Just leave me alone, you freaking *pest!"* He waved his arms about to attempt batting her away, but she darted around him expertly. All this experience with villains had certainly improved her agility.

"Hey!" Deku cried. Bakugo heard him drop his book and pen on the ground as he got to his feet, hurrying over and pulling his arms away to protect his pet.

"Oh, for *God's* sake!" Bakugo yelled as he stopped tussling, waiting for Siren to finally stop having a go at him. She ended up landing on Deku's shoulder, puffing out her chest like she was *all* that. "*What* do you *want?"* he hissed.

Deku gave him a look, "I don't want *anything* to do with *you.*"

"Then tell your bird to stop having a go at me literally *every time she sees me!"*

“I… I don’t know *why* she –”

“You know *exactly* why she does that,” Bakugo growled, prodding Deku in the chest. “You hate my *guts* and so she’s decided to –”

“I don’t *hate you!”* Deku interjected, which honestly surprised Bakugo. “Ugh! I thought you were getting better!” he yelled.

Something suddenly dawned on Bakugo – maybe it was the way Deku was so easily wielding his words. That shyness about him was fading. Bakugo found himself wary of the power that had rested dormant inside Deku for so long – something he could now arm himself with. He was a *real* opponent now; a real danger. He realised that if he decided to bring Deku to the ground, he had the capability to bring the entire building down along with him.

This little green bastard would make one terrifying villain.

No, he wasn’t talking about the bird.

“At that special course thing – I thought you were *actually* sorting some stuff out!” Deku continued, waving his arms about as he spoke, but Siren staying strong on his shoulder. “I thought that maybe UA had finally gotten through that *thick skull of yours* and knocked you down off your high horse but *no –”*

“What the *hell* are you talking about?!”

“I-I-I –” Deku stammered. Then, he squeezed his eyes tight shut, his hands balled into fists, “How *dare* you say that I had *Stockholm Syndrome!”*

How the *heck* did this conversation move onto *that?* Does Deku *actually know* how communicate his thoughts?!

“It was just a freaking observation!” Bakugo tried to reason.

“An *observation?!”* he repeated, and then again, a little louder, “An *OBSERVATION?!* Are you *kidding* me?! I-I –” he looked down at his hands, and then shook his head. “Nope – no – *no.* I can’t deal with this at the moment. Absolutely not.” Turning on his heel, he marched back over to where he had been sitting under the tree, and retrieved his

notebook and pen, before hurrying past Bakugo, slamming his shoulder again him harshly.

“Where are you *going?!”* Bakugo yelled after him as he disappeared down the path to Heights Alliance. “HEY!”

“Leave me alone!” he called back.

“Oh, so *now* you want me to go?!”

Damnit, Bakugo had forgotten how fast this bastard could move when he wanted to, and they were a lot closer to the dorms than he thought they had been, because Deku was already pretty much at the doors.

“You always give off such *mixed* signals – it’s no freaking *wonder* you have problems communicating. Don’t you think a *radio show* is a little ironic?!”

Deku tossed the doors open, letting them bounce off the walls as he chucked off his shoes, “The only thing that’s *ironic* was me thinking that *explosive* temper of yours had finally started to mellow out!”

Before Bakugo could say anything in reply, Four-eyes appeared, standing between them with folded arms. “I won’t be tolerating any fighting in the dorms again,” he insisted calmly.

The only reason he didn’t literally blow up in frustration, was because that would be proving Deku *right*.

Bakugo simply gritted his teeth, glancing around Iida’s form to meet those toxic green eyes, “We need to have a *talk.”*

Deku wasn’t the only one who stopped in his tracks, because those words seemed to grasp the attention of everyone in the room, who hadn’t already been transfixed by Deku’s yelling.

But Deku just narrowed his eyes, and after a glance towards Todoroki and Shinso nearby, said, “I can’t.”

“Why the hell –”

“I’m selectively mute.”

And with that, he left.

The more time that passed, the more impatient Midoriya became. He realised this and tried as hard as he could to hide it. He vigorously practised songs every evening so he could sleep all the way through the night. The stress would keep him up otherwise.

It was on an evening like this, that Midoriya, upon arriving back at Heights Alliance, felt his phone buzz.

And he wasn't the only one, because one after the other, Uraraka, Asui and Kirishima, all dotted around the room, slowly reached for their pockets at the sounds of various ringtones.

Midoriya grinned.

Not even Quirk exhaustion could get him to sleep peacefully that night.

The hours crept by slower than they had when he himself was awaiting rescue. Perhaps this is what the others felt like before Kamino. Was it wrong to *hope* that they did?

But the night couldn't last forever, at least, that was what Midoriya kept telling himself. Nonetheless, his alarm went off early that morning and his eyes snapped open. He wasn't too sure if he'd ever fallen asleep or not, or if he had just been lying there, in a dream-like state, milling through the thoughts that filled his brain until the sun finally rose.

It was time.

His heart was beating fast, pumping the adrenaline around his body far in advance to the battle this was bound to be (that it *had* to be).

He'd actually woken up a little earlier than he had needed to, well, a

lot earlier. He spent the next hour or so, pacing around the common room area, all the way to the kitchen, reciting lyrics in his head like he was about to have a pop quiz on them.

Eventually, the other three stirred.

"…Did you get any sleep at all, Canary?" asked Uraraka nervously.

Midoriya stopped his pacing and laughed sheepishly, "Is it that obvious?"

"You've just got to be careful not to wear yourself out, man," Kirishima reminded him. "Would you… like some toast?"

"Err, yeah, sure."

"To both?" he questioned, holding Midoriya's toast hostage until he agreed.

Midoriya sighed – Siren wanted to eat his food and was consequently biting his ear, "Sure."

"Are you taking Siren on your first official hero thing?" questioned Uraraka as she emerged from the bathrooms in her school uniform, ready to go.

"She's my sidekick," Midoriya grinned after taking a bite out of his breakfast. "Well, I could *try* and leave her behind… but…"

Uraraka laughed, "Very true – you'll do great, won't you, Siren?!"

She puffed out her little chest proudly, which had a few breadcrumbs on it, since she'd been attacking Midoriya's toast whilst he tried to eat the rest of it.

"Yeah *aren't you so cute* and so *fierce* – aw, she needs a cape. Or maybe a –"

It was at which point, that Mr Aizawa appeared.

Midoriya immediately ditched the rest of his toast, only giving a small piece to Siren because she would complain loudly all day if he didn't.

"Are you ready to go?" Mr Aizawa asked. He looked as tired as ever – his hands wrapped around the ends of his scarf as if he'd just hauled it on and had yet to adequately position it around his neck.

The four of them nodded surely, packing away their various breakfast items and grasping the cases concealing their hero costumes, set up by the door.

It wasn't a static shock that Midoriya felt when he picked his up, brandishing the bright and bold number 18 as he marched out of the dorms; that was just his fear –

No –

He smirked.

– his *excitement*, for the fight to finally be over.

On top of endless lyrics, Midoriya had pages and pages of Quirk details of Yakuza members to drill into his head. Thankfully, remembering things like was one of his greatest skills. Although, it did make him question once *again* whether or not that was a useful by-product of his Quirk or…

"Thank you all for coming," that was Sir Nighteye. They were now standing outside the Yakuza stronghold. Yes, they had finally been able to confirm that Eri was *here*, at least for the time being.

It was eight o'clock in the morning. Midoriya was standing by Mirio – his hero costume looked pretty cool. Maybe Midoriya should get a visor like that too; flying at high speeds was a real pain when you got dust in your eyes.

"Ready, Canary?" he grinned as the police officials continued to explain the operation.

Midoriya smiled in reply, nodding surely as he straightened the collar on his jacket.

The seconds, as they passed, were the beat to the song in his head – one of no particular power nor meaning. It was what hummed there – his Quirk, the pulse of his blood, the beat of his heart, the ticking of his thoughts. Soon faster than seconds. Time passed at the rate he permitted. Eight o'clock turned to eight thirty, and the police went to

knock on the door of the Shie Hassaikai.

They returned with a stronger force.

“WHAT DO YOU WANT?!” bellowed the Yakuza thug that smashed their own doors down.

It was more than a shock, but the experienced pros leapt right into action. Soon enough, Midoriya was gazing up at the dragon form of Ryukyo, holding back the villain’s second attack with ease.

“Go, NOW!” she roared, and Midoriya was quickly swept up with the moving force of the attacking party.

“We’ll see you guys soon!” Uraraka called after them, readying herself to fight alongside Asui and the rest of her work studies team. “Right, Canary?!”

But Midoriya didn’t have time to reply before she disappeared from view.

“Remember what I said, Problem Child?!” exclaimed Mr Aizawa, now running beside Midoriya and Mirio.

“I’m not leaving your sight,” Midoriya replied through gritted teeth.

“Exactly.”

“We’re the police and heroes!” cried the acting chief, running in behind the moving police front, armed with riot shields, as they stormed the otherwise peaceful *seeming* complex. “You’re suspected of the production and sale of illegal substances – we have a warrant to search this place!”

They did not come quietly, as expected.

Even those who appeared to be grounds keepers, dropped their tools and stepped in to protect the facility. A few of their group dropped off to deal with them as Midoriya followed the rest, bursting in through the doors of the stronghold.

Nighteye was in the lead. Although Midoriya hadn’t been listening as much as he probably should have to the preparations that morning, it seemed as though the hero had managed to communicate briefly with a member of the Yakuza, simply out on the street, collecting items for his *supposed daughter*. Nighteye had used his Quirk on him, foresight,

and was able to watch the man's *future* – seeing him weave through a complicated, underground maze, beneath this very facility, until he came across a scared little girl named *Eri.*

Nighteye led them down the unsuspecting corridors of a tranquil home. But it wasn't long before that illusion was shattered. He had located a complicated series of secret buttons, leading to an entire *wall* moving aside.

There were more members of the Yakuza waiting for them there.

They *had* to be on the right track.

But Midoriya wasn't too comfortable with how many heroes they were leaving behind. Their number dwindled as more and more were left to buy them time – fighting against the Yakuza, alone.

Midoriya needed to keep his mind *focused.*

That was hard when the very ground beneath their feet started to *move.*

It *had* to be a Quirk – most likely scenario – that of some guy called *Irinaka,* who had a mimicry ability…

"His Quirk lets him possess and control objects from the inside!" Fatgum recalled. Like many others, he was struggling to maintain his balance. The only exception was Siren, who had wisely taken to the air, hovering in place as she watched the rest of them trip and tumble. "But not to this extent…" the BMI hero continued, "Maybe he gave himself a little *boost."*

Ah, yes, the Quirk drugs. Midoriya kept forgetting that they weren't just here for Eri.

"Can you cancel it out, Eraser?!" questioned the police chief hurriedly, trying to support himself against the wall, which didn't help *at all.*

"Not unless I can catch a sight of his real body!"

"It doesn't matter!" Mirio suddenly yelled, "We still know the way to Eri, right?!" he turned back to Nighteye for confirmation.

He nodded, "Straight ahead – but Lemillion –"

"It's a race against the clock!" Mirio insisted, suddenly charging ahead in spite of the warping corridor. "See you guys on the other side!" and

with that, he phased through the wall, and disappeared.

“NO, WAIT!” Midoriya shouted after him, just a little too late. Whether he heard him or not, he was already gone. But… could he really face off against Overhaul on his own? No one else knew… No one else had seen what Midoriya had seen – no one else *understood* –

“Canary!” called out that cranky hero – Lock Rock, “You draw power from songs, right?!”

Midoriya was quickly drawn out from his distressing thoughts, “U-Um, yes, Sir, I –”

“Then don’t you have a power that can help you get rid of this guy’s *stupid* Quirk?!”

“That’s a good point, Canary!” insisted Mr Aizawa. It was kind of weird, hearing him call him by his hero name.

“I-I do!” he replied. Siren was starting to whistle the tune now, edging him on. “But I can only use each of my songs once! If I use it now, I won’t have access to it again for at least –”

“JUST USE IT!” Lock Rock cried.

But before Midoriya could do anything else, the floor simply melted away, swallowing the heroes, Midoriya, and a few of the police officers. They plunged into the dark below, and the floor – now the ceiling – closed up behind them.

Midoriya scrambled to his feet. They hadn’t fallen far – only one floor – but he’d still managed to knock his head a little.

Tweet, tweet!

That was Siren – who must have followed them down. But that particular tone of voice – chirp – *whatever* – that was a *warning.*

Midoriya turned on his heel, coming face to face with three Yakuza goons.

“Why, look at what we’ve got ‘ere,” jeered the one with the sword slung over his shoulder. “A couple of canaries – falling from the sky.”

Midoriya took a fighting stance. It didn’t last long; seconds later, Amajiki slid in front of him, a determined look on his face.

“I can take them, you go on ahead,” he insisted. “Cancel out that guy’s Quirk and save Eri. Leave this to me.”

“No, no, *stay,”* laughed the armed stranger – Setsuno. Midoriya recalled his name from the Quirk sheets. “Let’s silence the *canaries.* Overhaul told us all about that metaphor! It’s *fun* – means danger’s on its way…”

“GO!” Amajiki yelled.

There was further argument between him and the other heroes, but they didn’t have time for this. They left when Amajiki had already managed to disarm and restrain the three villains – Mr Aizawa had even knocked one of them out. Midoriya didn’t know how long they would stay like that, but time was of the essence. Siren was still singing the tune Midoriya needed to utter. He followed her fleeting form out of the room they had been confined to, and disappeared off down the hallways, their number decreasing even further…

Midoriya was running up front, alongside Kirishima and Siren now, their hurried footsteps echoing around them. It was harrowing.

“The corridor’s not moving anymore…” panted the police chief, who had managed to follow them all this way. “Does he not have control of the whole basement after all?”

“Suneater’s back there, and the rest of the police force is above,” Lock Rock acknowledged, “Perhaps he’s focusing his attention on them?!”

“Maybe he didn’t become the entire basement,” Mr Aizawa suggested. “He could be sneaking through the walls – watching and listening. So, when he’s shifting things around to slow us down, he has to be near by – sticking his eyes and ears out to observe…”

“That means he has to be able to hear Canary!” Kirishima realised. “So, your Quirk will work on him, man!”

“Or Mr Aizawa’s would,” Midoriya replied, gritting his teeth. He’d *really* rather not use one of his most useful songs so early.

But then, all of a sudden – the wall sprung to life again. Two great pillars extended from the left – one enclosing Mr Aizawa, and the other, Midoriya, pushing them both towards a vortex like hole to the right –

“CANARY!” Kirishima yelled. With a twist and a leap, he turned and

pushed Midoriya out of the way, slamming right into Fatgum as he did the same for Mr Aizawa.

“No – wait – Kirishima!”

But the wall took the two heroes before Midoriya could do anything more, and they disappeared from view.

“CANARY, THE SONG!” yelled Lock Rock insistently.

“NO, NOT NOW!” Mr Aizawa retorted.

They all fell silent, including Siren.

“He’s gone again,” Midoriya’s teacher sighed. “If Canary started singing then, he wouldn’t be able to stop without losing that ability for at least the rest of the day.” He gave Lock Rock a look.

“Stop fighting!” Nighteye scolded them. “The stairs are just up ahead. We need to get back to Lemillion as quickly as possible!”

Midoriya was a little less certain about moving on this time. It had been different with Amajiki…

He didn’t know the third-year well, at least, not nearly as well as Mirio. But… he seemed so familiar – in his mannerisms and personality. He reminded Midoriya of, well, himself. If Amajiki was so sure that he could hold those three thugs back, then Midoriya had complete confidence in him.

Kirishima though? Midoriya was painstakingly aware of how underprepared he was for all this. He’d experienced few classes in heroics, and his knowledge of his friends’ Quirks was very limited. Whatever Kirishima was facing – he hoped he’d be ok…

They had gone up the stairs now. Midoriya’s legs hadn’t started to ache yet from all this running, but he had a feeling they would in the morning…

“He’s being cautious…” realised Mr Aizawa, glancing around at the immobile walls. “He must have heard our conversation about Canary’s abilities.”

“If he’s still in earshot then use the damn power!” protested Lock Rock.

Why does this guy have to be so *difficult?*

“I *can’t!”* Midoriya exclaimed, “If I make one mistake then –”

He couldn’t say anything more, because the concrete of the wall reached out to him once again, smothering his mouth and pushing him backwards.

“Canary!” Mr Aizawa called out – reaching towards him as the entire corridor opened out, pulling Midoriya back with it as the hidden villain formed a large hall with a remarkably high ceiling. Midoriya’s teacher was glancing around frantically, trying to catch a glimpse of Irinaka, whilst keeping hold of Midoriya’s wrist, refusing to let him get yanked away.

The hall didn’t keep its shape for long, before the concrete came slamming down again, moving as fluid as water as it fragmented the group even further. Midoriya was just surprised he hadn’t been crushed completely.

This was so frustrating. So, *so* frustrating! Midoriya had only *seconds* at a time to use his Quirk and it just *never* worked out. There were so many limitations and boundaries –

There was a yell.

Oh, *screw it.*

~Pompeii – Bastille~

“*And the walls kept tumbling down –”*

Midoriya started as soon as the concrete parted from his face. He fell to the ground, did a roll and quickly clambered to his feet, hurrying over to the wall that separated him and Mr Aizawa from the others.

“*Great clouds roll over the hills –”*

He smiled as he lifted his hand and rested it on the wall before him. The music wasn’t playing aloud, but he could hear it, in his head.

“*But if you close your eyes!”*

From his hand, the wall grew black as soot and crumbled – the spread of the plague-like volcanic ash growing faster the deeper into the chorus he got.

The wall that crumbled before him revealed the sight of none other than Lock Rock, lying face down on the ground, blood oozing from what seemed to be a stab wound, with a *double* standing over him.

"*– Does it almost feel like you've been here before…"*

He narrowed his eyes, marching forwards, the ash following his footsteps.

"*How am I gonna be an optimist about this?"*

Mr Aizawa leapt towards him moments later, holding his capture weapon at the ready as he assessed the situation. With a glow of his eyes, the Lock Rock clone that had been smiling so strangely at them, melted into someone who was *equally* annoying and a *lot* more familiar – unfortunately.

"*We were caught up and lost –"*

"Izuku! You're singing again!" Toga squealed, drawing a blade as she ran at them, her body melting around her. "Did you realise I would be here?! I read your *report!* You didn't say very nice things about me!"

"*– as the dust…"*

Midoriya kept his cool, raising a threatening hand – but Mr Aizawa was quick about it, wrapping her up in his capture tape and reeling her in close.

But as Toga expertly manoeuvred herself, despite being in the clutches of Mr Aizawa's scarf, Midoriya saw her pull out a knife, aiming it at his teacher's back. Siren tweeted a warning from Midoriya's side, but he was already in the right frame of mind.

With a flick of his wrist, the end of Mr Aizawa's scarf disintegrated into clouds of ash, knocking off Toga's aim and sending her tumbling across the corridor, crashing against the wall.

"*Great clouds –"*

The music swelled in his head – the power spreading further and further from his body as the surrounding walls tumbled to the ground

– obscuring his view with the ash and sending Toga falling through the floor.

With a stomp of his feet, stopping before the chorus began, the final barrier separating them from Nighteye disappeared. Through the cloud of dust, a large villain was tossed. He melted to nothing but gunk before them; it was the clear handywork of Twice.

“THESE YAKUZA ARE USELESS!” the man himself yelled, barrelling through the lingering ash and leaping at a withstanding wall, which moved for him – protecting himself from the heroes as they regrouped.

Midoriya gritted his teeth – this was his chance.

~Human – Christina Perry~

“‘Cause I’m only human!” he cried. His mind screaming at him for not only moving poorly from one song to another – but now he’d sacrificed his chance to continue using the destructive power of Pompeii *and* lowered his chances against Overhaul; this was his only powerful Quirk preventing song.

“*And I crash and I break down!”*

He hated his limitations – everything that was a *possibility* for him, but just out of reach. It made him question whether he really was a match for Overhaul at *all* – whether Mirio was.

“‘Cause I’m only human!”

Nonetheless, it *worked*.

From the ceiling, the man who must have been controlling the concrete tumbled, bewildered and *extremely* frustrated. Nighteye tossed some kind of miniaturised weight at him. It threw him at the closest surviving wall, and he slid down to the ground, unconscious.

“Good job, Canary,” Nighteye nodded, the slightest hint of praise taking a blow at the negative thoughts in Midoriya’s head.

He just nodded, panting, his hands now on his knees.

“Now what?” questioned Lock Rock. One of the members of the police force (it was impressive that they’d managed to keep up for so long, really) had bandaged the hero’s stab wounds up with part of Mr Aizawa’s scarf, ripped in two by Midoriya’s Quirk. Despite that, the red persisted to spill from him. Midoriya could only hope that it wasn’t fatal. “You lot still know which way to go?”

“Eri’s room is not far from here,” Nighteye agreed. “But I can’t be sure that is where they are.”

“We’ll head in that direction,” Mr Aizawa insisted, surveying the damage to his capture weapon.

“I’ll stay behind,” Lock Rock suddenly proclaimed, resting his head back on the wall behind him. “The League is somewhere around here… still…”

“If the League of Villains really is still around,” added the police chief, “We cannot turn a blind eye. You three go on ahead to Chisaki and the girl. We’ll remain here.”

Midoriya was uncertain, “A-Are you sure we –”

“QUIT YAPPING AND GET MOVING!” Lock Rock yelled. “I’LL KEEP AN EYE ON IRINAKA, JUST GET *GOING!”*

“Right!” Midoriya exclaimed and turned on his heel to run after Nighteye and Mr Aizawa. Three remained out of the *army* that first charged the stronghold. But that wouldn’t stop them…

It was all happening so quickly… too quickly.

Midoriya felt like he’d been swept up in this current of motion – a force that he should have been part of but seemed beyond his control. How long had it been since he was up on the surface? How long had it been since these unnerving thoughts didn’t hammer at his brain? How long had it been… since he was with the villains? Since he was the victim, and not the hero?

But was he the hero back then anyway? He’d saved Eri, right?

…No.

No – Eri saved *him*.

She was *his* hero.

Now, it was Midoriya's turn. And he had to make sure he told her that – told her that she was his hero.

He had to find her.

"I don't know if we're going the right way!" Nighteye voiced as they continued to run. "We're going towards Eri's room – but it wouldn't make sense for them to still be there!"

Screw the limitations.

Midoriya blinked back the tears and swallowed the lump in his throat. He needed a way to track Eri and Mirio – did he have a song that could do that? Come on, think – *think!* What lyrics…? Track… Follow… Map… Find… Rescue… Help –

Rescue.

Yes, yes! That could work – hopefully.

Midoriya bit his lip – damn – this was a slower song…

Ok, calm – *calm* – steady – *breathe*…

~Rescue – Lauren Daigle~

"*I will… send out an army to find you…*"

Slower – calmer –

He closed his eyes, trying to disconnect himself from the adrenaline and the panic, slowing his breathing.

"*I will rescue you…*"

He opened his eyes again, Mr Aizawa and Nighteye were staring at him as they ran.

Midoriya had never used this song before; he'd never attempted it. He couldn't have known if the power would activate quick enough.

But maybe it was his desperation – or his connection to those lyrics, that drove the power forwards.

He skidded to a halt, gazing down a corridor that Nighteye had dismissed.

"*You're not defenceless…"*

Midoriya didn't need to say a word to get the two heroes to follow him, as he began to lead them down the twisting labyrinth.

He also didn't know if they could hear the same thing that he could –

That distant, quiet sound of a girl sobbing.

"*I hear you whisper underneath your breath…"*

Siren flew along behind him, whistling the backing tune – until they hit a dead end.

"*…I hear your SOS, your SOS…"*

Which was when he stopped.

The last note echoed in the dark.

Something powerful sent vibrations through the stone, shaking the little pieces of rubble and rock by their feet.

"I can hear something behind the wall," said Mr Aizawa. "They must be in there – how do we get through?"

Midoriya's head *throbbed.* Three songs in a row like this? All of which jumping straight to the chorus… *Wow,* it made him dizzy. He tried to hide it – hoping *dearly* that he wouldn't have to use and waste yet *another* power to defeat the final obstacle.

Thankfully, one little mistake on the other side, solved that problem for them.

There was another rumble, and the concrete fell to pieces.

Midoriya didn't hesitate, and jumped right through, milliseconds before the wall reformed into deadly spikes, by the hand of a man whose face Midoriya had once wished he never had to see again.

"Canary?" Mirio called out, turning his head only slightly away from his *opponent*. The hero had seen better days, that's for sure. His cape had been ripped from his shoulders and his hair stuck to the side of his face, matted with sweat, tears… and blood.

"CANARY!" Eri yelled.

Eri.

"Bluebird…"

As Siren landed on Midoriya's shoulder, *Overhaul* let out a bellowing laugh.

"The canary's underground," he smirked. "You found your voice again – but I can take it away. You'll risk that for Eri? She is a *curse* – a *plague* – and I will use her to *fix* this society, once and for all."

"You're wrong," Midoriya hissed, standing straight and upright in defiance against this *evil* man. "Eri is not a curse – that's *all you."*

They stared at one another for a moment – a few seconds in which Midoriya realised Mr Aizawa and Nighteye weren't coming. They must have gotten trapped behind that wall.

"NEMOTO!" Overhaul suddenly yelled.

Midoriya didn't know that name – who was –

"*CANARY – LOOK OUT!"* cried Mirio.

Siren let off a warning call, and Midoriya turned his head –

His eyes stared down the barrel of a gun.

BANG!

“SIREN!”

Chapter End Notes

I’m not sorry.

Songs used in this chapter:

Pompeii – Bastille

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m326LNIRB3k

Human – Christina Perri – cover by Austin and Kurt Schneider

https://youtu.be/f98kIowZAUw

Rescue – Lauren Daigle – cover by Joey Stamper

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wG4MF7GwZkU

No, I am –

Sorry

Art!

I remembered to look at Tumblr again!

This is from **thatrandomsuidicalfangirl** who did a *beautiful* drawing of what's *probably* on Canary's hero licence card!

Also on Tumblr, **your-kind-hearted-anon** did this really cute doodle titled 'Insult this bird and I *will* make you do the macarena in front of everyone'

From the discord server, we have –

FiveInBinaryOr101 with this masterpiece of Shinso and Siren XD They apologise for it being flipped the wrong way around, but the other way, the writing got mirrored for some reason – either way, it's pretty great XD

basically-shakespeare did a Canary doodle too! Listening to music!

AmyStarSmith has drawn Midoriya – flying free! She also did a drawing of my avatar which is super cute so I thought I'd share

Leith has done Canary in his hero costume!

SoftLittleBlanket has done a depiction (trigger alert) of Canary's injury! Which looks pretty damn *amazing*

Aaaaand, last but by no means the least, **Thelovypop17** is up with some fanart of *Brain Blank!*

There's also some other *really, really **x 1 000 000 000** really* cool stuff going on!

First up, is something done by **deuynn**, which is an Instagram based on Canary! It's like, meant to be an extension of what Canary's social media account would be like – so they want to do lots of cute little arts for different slice of life situations and it's so cooool!

We also have – you're not gonna believe this –
Two animatics!

One, is by Syra Eerie – which is gonna be a Sports Festival thing! I've seen bits of it already and oh my God guys, it's so cool – I actually cried. Look at this little snippet of their artwork! It's Midoriya and Siren and aaaaahhhhhhhh – here's Midoriya singing Safe and Sound to Eri!

Two, is by **SunsetAnimations**! Which is based around Siren! The rough edit is so adorable I love it!

Extended art section! (11/02/21)

Bitoe from Discord drew a winged Izuku!

Cute_Kirby said that it was a shame that no one had drawn Siren on Nighteye's nose yet :D

An adorably determined drawing of both canaries by Venkiin!

Check out this very short animatic of Set Fire to the Rain by **i.think.this.is.art** on TikTok!

Sacrifices

Chapter Notes

Nope, not the end of the story.

Will I give you a new estimation?

Absolutely not. I no longer trust myself.

The song used in the first part of this chapter (you'll see in a second) is not sang by Midoriya. There is also not a cover out there which *exactly* fits what I wanted. If you still want to listen along, this is the best option. But bear in mind that it won't flow as nicely as other songs do, because for most music, I don't write down some lyrics so that it can be going on in the background whilst you read and stuff... But you might know the tune anyways!

I also don't think this is the *best* chapter I've ever done but I tried and I've had a tough week here you go -

CHARACTER LIMITS IN THE END NOTES WILL BE THE DEATH OF ME

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Shinso left his room that morning, he stopped in the corridor. The door to Midoriya's room, next-door, was wide open. He crept around it unsurely and peered inside. His bed was left messy and unmade – pyjamas tossed aside with equal untidiness, which was unlike him. Midoriya liked everything to at least have *some* kind of order and logic. Not to the extent that Iida did, but still…

He stood there for a moment, and Todoroki soon joined him, “We should get going; we’ll be late for registration…” he voiced.

“…Yeah,” Shinso nodded, shifting the position of his bag over his shoulder.

He remembered that the work study group had all received messages yesterday evening, probably indicating that something big was about to go down… And Shinso had a strong feeling it revolved around Eri.

“…He’ll be ok,” Todoroki said as they walked down the stairs together, leaving Midoriya’s door swinging open as he’d left it.

Shinso swallowed and nodded, “I know.”

But it was a lie – because he *didn’t* know… And a nagging thought in the back of his mind reminded him that there was a good chance that he was *not* ok – even now.

It was just like before, when Midoriya was with the villains… Shinso knew he was out there, fighting, *somewhere* – but it was out of his reach. He couldn’t help him now. All he could do, was hope that he wouldn’t be a reckless idiot again and over-do it…

“Besides…” Todoroki added as they reached the door, giving him the slightest of smiles as he turned his head, “He has Siren to look after him.”

Shinso let himself grin too, “Yeah, obviously. And that little bird is indestructible.”

“Exactly,” his friend nodded. He passed him a cup of coffee from the side of the table. Perhaps he’d made it before coming up to check on him. Shinso *had* slept in quite late, which was unlike *him*… Everything was backwards, wasn’t it?

Shinso accepted it with a grateful nod after pulling on his shoes, and the two left Heights Alliance together.

“I heard Mr Aizawa was going with the work studies group,” Shinso remembered. “Maybe we won’t get told off for being a little bit late then – by anyone other than Iida, that is.”

Todoroki grinned, “Yeah.”

Shinso sighed, “I bet it’s Present Mic – you don’t know the pain of his

morning registrations – his afternoon ones weren't much better. But the *mornings* – God, he's so loud – I'm not alive enough for this..."

"I wonder if Canary will ever end up being more like Present Mic," pondered Todoroki, swirling his own cup thoughtfully.

"God, I hope not," Shinso groaned. "I can see it happening though. Midoriya's *always* been so… energetic and enthusiastic – he was just so shy and apologetic about it."

"He's improving though."

"Yeah – and quickly too. Ever since Eri's Quirk saved his voice, he's really… I-I don't know. Either figured things out or made them worse."

Todoroki shrugged, "Probably a bit of both."

"Probably," Shinso agreed, chugging the rest of his coffee and letting the last few droplets run down the edge of the mug that now hung leisurely from his fingertips as they strolled along.

In the morning light, a couple of birds dove in front of them, twisting around in the air happily.

"I hope they find Eri," said Todoroki, breaking the eerie calm.

Shinso just nodded, watching a warm trickle of liquid escape from the little volume that remained in the cup, and run down his hand. "Me too."

Somewhere…

BANG!

“SIREN!”

…over the rainbow –

Midoriya had always been good at dodging – avoiding the inevitable – running away. But without some kind of intense speed booster, not even *he* could dodge a bullet.

Way up high…

Siren had been on his shoulder. She moved before the masked man pulled the trigger. A little green blur before him – there one second, gone the next, tossed to the ground in a flurry of feathers, and the syringe-like shape of the red bullet.

– There’s a land that I heard of once in a lullaby…

“SIREN – NO!” Midoriya yelled as the bird plummeted to the ground, tumbling across the room until she flopped up against a great concrete spike, surrounded by the broken pieces of the red bullet, contrasting horrendously against her green self.

“YOU HIT THE STUPID BIRD!” yelled Overhaul.

Somewhere over the rainbow –

“I-I’m sorry!” called back the man who had shot her – Nemoto.

There was a crash and another bang – and a piece of the wall behind Midoriya fell to pieces. From it, came Nighteye and Mr Aizawa. The concrete had been very thin, and Nighteye must have used his compressed weights to hammer it apart, forming a hole just large enough to haul themselves through.

…Skies are blue

"LEMILLION, ERI!" Nighteye called out, leaping over the rock and rubble towards the two of them. He wrapped them into a tight embrace, muttering his praise to his battered student. Eri's gaze did not leave Midoriya's as he scrambled over to Siren.

And the dreams –

With shaking hands, he scooped her up. "No, Siren – *no…"*

– that you dare to dream –

Warm liquid trickled down the back of Midoriya's fingers, and a silent tear from his cheek. But the bird was still breathing.

– really do come true…

Meanwhile, Mr Aizawa had charged at Overhaul. His eyes glowed red as he went in for the attack, "Lemillion's backed you into a corner – it's time you paid for what you've done!" Midoriya didn't think he'd ever seen his teacher look so angry. Although, he hadn't spent nearly enough time around him, being far more used to Present Mic's attitude than Mr Aizawa's.

"*WAKE UP, CHRONO!"*

Still by Siren, Midoriya didn't have the time to warn Mr Aizawa about the fallen man in the white hood. The hero spotted him too – but too late. An arrow-like strand of hair shot out from under the fabric, piercing Aizawa's arm.

"Eraser!" Nighteye called out. "Take care of them, Canary!" he ordered. He charged towards Mr Aizawa who was literally falling in slow motion – the act of that mysterious person's Quirk, no doubt. His eyes uncontrollably started to drift shut – droplets of water oozing from them as the time slowed around him. His erasure effect would wear off soon.

With Siren in his unsteady palms, Midoriya leapt over to the huddle, letting the bird slide into his pocket as he reached out for Eri, taking her into his arms as the entire floor erupted.

Someday I'll wish –

He shut his eyes tight, holding Eri close. He felt Mirio's arms around the two of them two, shielding them from the debris Overhaul created with an anguished cry.

"Go… take Eri – go…" Mirio insisted, gripping Midoriya's arm and pushing him gently away.

– upon a star…

"Not happening," Midoriya said through gritted teeth.

…And wake up where –

But then his mouth fell agape. Because now standing before Nighteye, was not Mr Aizawa, nor Overhaul or any of his underlings. This was

something *entirely* different.

Overhaul had used his Quirk on *himself*, pulling himself apart, alongside the man who had tried to shoot Midoriya – and had put the two back together again, forming one, unnatural *monster*.

– the clouds are far behind… me…

"Get out of here – go!" Nighteye instructed, "All of you!"

Midoriya didn't know where Mr Aizawa had gone – and that guy in the hood. But he had Eri, and he had Mirio.

Where the clouds are far behind –

"Can you walk?" he asked the older student.

"Y-Yes I –"

"Then follow me!"

Me…

Scooping up Eri, he led the way back to that hole in the wall. He let Mirio squeeze through first, passed Eri through to him, and then followed. His head screamed at him for leaving Nighteye behind, but…

…he had always been good at running away.

Where troubles melt like lemon drops…

The weight of it all pulled him back, like the chains that were once clamped around his arms. But he pushed on forwards, trying to support Mirio the best he could, despite him being much taller. He was growing weaker by the second.

They hadn't gotten far before –

– away above the chimney tops –

"SIR!"

– Nighteye took a blow to the chest.

That's where…

"*Is this what you want, Eri?"* Overhaul called out. There was a mouth on his hand – the mouth of the other man he'd destroyed to reform this new, horrific body.

– you'll…

Eri's big, rosy eyes stared at Nighteye – at the spike through his body and at the agony etched on his face.

– find…

"…No," she whimpered, getting down from Mirio's arms.

"Eri – no, stop –" Midoriya tried.

– Me…!

"*He was defeated so easily…"* the hypnotising voice continued. "*Lemillion doesn't have the strength left – and you really think that little bird would stand a chance?"*

Midoriya was still holding Mirio up as Eri started to walk back to her captor, "Bluebird –"

Somewhere!

"N-No, I don't…" she whimpered, now running barefoot towards that monster.

– Over the rainbow!

"Then what should you do?"

Bluebirds fly…

"…Go back to you!"

"ERI, NO! Don't *listen* to him!" Midoriya protested, carefully lowering Mirio to the floor. He pulled Siren from his pocket and handed her carefully over. Without a word, he ran after Eri.

If birds fly –

"…Go get him, Canary…" were the feeble words of Mirio as he charged back into the fight.

– over the rainbow

"–and in exchange!" Eri demanded, her little hands balled into fists before Overhaul, "You have to make everyone better again!

…why, oh why –

"That's right…" Overhaul grinned, looking up at Midoriya as he came to a halt just after the hole in the wall. "You see, Canary? She doesn't want your help. You never saved her. You only brought *pain* on her, and everyone else."

Midoriya lowered his head.

– can't I?

"No – I didn't save her."

Eri stopped.

Oh if –

Midoriya looked up and *glared* with all the anger he could muster. If he couldn't control it, then he would *use* it.

– happy –

"*She* saved *me."*

– little bluebirds fly –

Tears brimmed in Eri's eyes as she gazed back at him.

"She saved ME!" Midoriya repeated with greater determination, "And now it's *my* turn to give everything I've got in return!"

– beyond the rainbow…

"It will be your doom!"

Midoriya smiled, "Maybe."

Why, oh why…

"But if there's even the smallest chance that I can change the future – and make you smile again, Bluebird – then I will."

Can't I?

Eri took a few more steps towards him. She was clutching a piece of red fabric – what remained of Mirio's cape.

…Why?

She fell back into his arms, sobbing uncontrollably.

"This canary's still singing," Midoriya said, stroking the hair around

Eri's horn gingerly. "And I will never stop – never again."

Why can't…

"*Don't leave me,"* Eri sobbed, clutching his jacket tightly.

Midoriya shook his head, "No – never."

I *promise."*

…I?

Eri wanted to go with Overhaul.

Because if she did, they wouldn't get *hurt* anymore…

She didn't know Lemillion well – but he had been so kind. He was smiling even when he was hurt… He almost lost his Quirk because of her – it was *her* fault. And then Siren got hurt too! She didn't know where the bird was now. She hoped she was ok.

And Canary…

It felt like so long ago, when she ran into him in the streets. He took her to places she never thought she'd be able to see… Where people are happy and kind – where they smile no matter what. Eri had felt that too – the happiness…

Then Canary took her out for a walk. She liked doing that. She liked

hearing the birds and looking at the sky. But it *wasn't* Canary… It was a scary woman – she took her back to Overhaul. Now she wasn't sure who was who… But this – this was definitely *her* Canary. He was kind and had the prettiest voice in the world…

Owl had a pretty voice too. But she seemed shier about it. They were all going to sing and dance for Canary – Eri saw them practise.

She wanted to see it – their performance. She wanted to see them finish it – a-and Momo, she missed *Momo*…

She wanted to be with Canary.

She wanted to go home.

This wasn't home. It never was. She understood what home felt like now. And O-Overhaul was a *bad man.* No, she didn't want to go with him…

She wanted to stay with Canary – with his wide smile and kind words…

But then there was a big bang, and the whole roof fell in. There was a *dragon* – and Eri knew this had to be another hero! She liked heroes – that she had decided.

From the hole the dragon had formed – there was a glow of light – the *sky.* She wanted to reach out to it.

Dove was there! And Froppy too!

It lit a light inside her that had been all but extinguished – something that she was so unused to.

Hope.

"GIVE ME ERI!" Overhaul cried.

All of a sudden, Eri felt herself being ripped from Canary's arms, knocked by a pillar of rock that extended high into the sky.

Still holding onto Lemillion's cape, Eri was with Overhaul now, clutched within one of his claw-like hands.

"You don't *understand* her true power!" he yelled down at Canary. Eri couldn't quite see him, from up on this pillar; her vision was all blurry from the tears. "All you think of is pathetic things like *restoration* – whilst I? *I* see a world made new – the power to destroy everything you know! That is Eri!"

They were close to the surface now. The freedom of the sky – so close, yet so far.

Eri curled up into herself – ready to take the pain. She couldn't be saved, no… b-but –

"She saved ME! And now it's my turn to give everything I've got in return!"

…please.

"Dove! Make me float!" Canary cried. "*Please* – I have to get up there!"

Uraraka gazed at him. It felt so long ago that the same boy struggled to utter a word to her.

"*…No."*

Everyone gazed down to Nighteye, lying in Uraraka's arms. They hadn't removed the spike.

"*No – if you chase after them… you'll die, Canary,"* he wheezed.

Uraraka's eyes grew wide.

Nighteye's Quirk – foresight – *he'd seen the future…*

“You won’t save the girl,” he continued, forcing the sentence out in spite of his obvious pain. “You and I will die. It is a future we cannot avoid – I’m *sorry.”*

Uraraka turned slowly back to Canary.

It was not fear, but sheer *determination* that filled his eyes, “I made a promise – and I’m not going to break it.”

“You risk… breaking *yourself…”*

“I don’t care – Uraraka, now.”

“…We’ll help you,” Tsuyu insisted, struggling to get to her feet. That fight had taking a lot out of *all* of them, *especially* with that horrible energy draining Quirk.

Uraraka slowly reached out over Nighteye’s form. With tears in her eyes, she said, “You have to finish that promise to *me* – that you’ll see us all soon, o-ok?”

Canary grinned – it was sad, sympathetic, as he reached back out towards him, “I’ll try,” he said.

It wasn’t a promise.

Nonetheless, Uraraka gripped his hand, and allowed his body to drift slowly off the ground. With a deep breath, he pulled his headphones on over his head, tapped something onto the device stubbornly tied around his arm, and a gentle, rising sound began to play.

~Radioactive – Imagine Dragons~

He started to hum it, pushing up off the floor and rising up into the sky, taking the music with him.

The back of his jacket – Uraraka could see the painted, green wings there. The way it was blown around in the soft wind gave the illusion of real wings as he clutched his fists into balls and reached Overhaul’s eyeline, still hovering before him.

Down below, Uraraka gulped, her hands ready to release him as soon as he was safe.

You can do this, Canary!

"You think a little song can stop me?" Overhaul drawled.

Midoriya wasn't safely over the edge yet, still hovering just before him as he continued to hum.

"I hope it's meaningful," he sighed – perhaps indicating that he didn't know it *or* understand the lyrics… good. "It'll be the last one you ever sing."

"No! Please!" Eri begged, struggling out of Overhaul's grip, still holding onto the ripped cape. "Don't *hurt* him anymore!"

Overhaul just clutched her tighter in his claw, letting out a slight, manic laugh as Midoriya drew closer with a slight kick of his legs.

"Too late Eri – you brought this upon him yourself."

But as the music finally began to swell, Midoriya let himself grin – and Uraraka let go of her power, just as the verse began for him to *slam* down to the rock before him.

"*I'm waking up –"*

Overhaul *roared* –

"– to ash and dust!"

He lunged, wrecking the pillar beneath their feet as he did so.

"*– and I sweat my rust."*

He couldn't help but smile – not just to look brave for Eri, but *this* was his element. It was all just a dance, after all.

He inhaled mockingly along with the song, feeling the power he had

cultivated, starting to swell beneath.

Midoriya dodged and twirled. How at ease he seemed, *infuriated* Overhaul. He lashed out, obliterating the platform on which they were standing upon –

– Eri screamed, as she fell from the villain's grip.

Midoriya threw himself off the crumbling edge and managed to grab Eri with one hand. By some miracle, his momentum allowed him to reach a spike protruding from the wall with the other, which he gripped with his free hand, grunting in the pain of his arm being wrenched, he forced himself to keep singing.

As it turns out, Overhaul's reason for falling… was to get to the other Yakuza thug…

Oh no.

He quickly shifted Eri to his back and leapt from the spike with the greatest swing he could muster.

"*I feel it in my bones!"*

The power was growing – he hoped it was enough as he winced and held out his hands to the wall he was heading right towards.

"*– my systems blow!"*

Green tipped fingers dug into the rock; it melted before him with a sizzle and a crackle of green power.

With a dreaded turn of his head, Midoriya's eyes met that of Overhaul once more. He rose up from the depths as a *beast* beyond compare. A horrific fusion of three separate people.

"*– to the new age –"*

A manic laugh and the monster reached out to grasp Midoriya and Eri. His power wasn't strong enough to do what he wanted yet.

He couldn't even tell Eri to hold on tight as he pushed off the wall –

"*I'm –"*

– summersaulted through the air and landed on the back of that giant hand.

"*– radioactive!"*

Not a moment's hesitation passed as he charged up the length of Overhaul's arm, dodging his attacks as the villain seemed not to care if he tore himself even further apart. Now on what *seemed* to be his shoulder, Midoriya took another leap of faith, holding Eri, now tight in his arms, as he rolled onto the surface, cushioned by his power which ripped the road apart into softer sand and gravel.

"*I raise my flags –"*

Overhaul's claw reached up and scratched at the concrete, hauling himself upwards.

Meanwhile, Midoriya put Eri down. Without being able to speak to her, he signed one of the few words he'd taught her, [*Fly!*]

"*We're painted red, to fit right in…"*

She understood, turned on her heel and *ran,* just in time for Midoriya to dodge the fist that attempted to squash him like a bug.

"*I'm breaking in, and shaping up…"*

Overhaul towered before him now. This hadn't been what he expected – this wasn't plan a, nor b – but he'd make it work.

"*This is it –"*

He took a fighting stance…

"*– the apocalypse."*

…and stared defiantly up at his opponent.

There was a rumble and Midoriya struggled to maintain his balance. As the chorus began, he raised his hands forwards to protect himself.

"*– I feel it in my bones!"*

Moving spikes and pillars erupted from the ground right at Midoriya's hands. Hands, which glowed the same toxic green that now filled the sclera of his eyes.

"*Welcome to the new age –"*

He skidded backwards, but not far, as his feet dug into the damaged

road and Overhaul's attack hissed and bubbled into a molten mess that joined the toxic pool beneath Midoriya's feet.

"*– to the new age!"*

Attack after attack – Midoriya managed to deflect and evade. Yes, there were other songs out there that could have defeated Overhaul. But this, after much experimentation, not only proved to be safer to others and himself than Midoriya initially expected, but it wouldn't (shouldn't) *kill* Overhaul – and was one of the best, and most satisfying, counters to the devastating ability, that Midoriya could find.

"*– radioactive!"*

A power to rip apart and *ruin* whatever Midoriya pleased – one of the only powers, that could make this monster of a man surrender. He could see it in his *eyes* – a fear of something he so easily could have prevented and destroyed, not so long ago.

"*– radioactive!"*

"CANARY!"

"*All systems –"*

Midoriya turned his head from Overhaul for a second, likely unwise in the intense battle, but he had been knocked a while back – and that was *Eri's* voice.

"*– sun hasn't died…"*

She was in the arms of Uraraka – but she was *melting*. Her costume dripped off her alongside her skin, revealing the manic expression of Toga. That too, quickly melted, when she saw not only the sparks forming at Eri's horn, but the glowing green of Midoriya's furious eyes.

He'd had – *ENOUGH!*

"I'm waking –"

One hand extended towards Toga, and the other at Overhaul, a minute amount of time before the chorus began, he let out the greatest expanse of his power as possible – two beams of green light – one which went straight through Overhaul's beastly body, and the

other penetrating Toga's shoulder.

"*– make my systems blow!"*

Toga turned to dust – but Midoriya didn't have time to be relieved that she had just been a clone. Skidding towards Eri as her power spilled as free and uncontrolled as Midoriya's words, he wrapped himself around her.

"*Welcome to the new age… to the new age."*

With the obscuring glow of green, Overhaul hadn't noticed the release of Eri's power – and with the arm that *hadn't* been obliterated, he reached out to tear the two of them apart, once and for all!

"*I'm – radioactive, radioactive!"*

Many witnessed it, but none could say quite what happened –

But they knew it was a with a great explosion of green and gold, that Overhaul and his counterparts were torn apart.

"*– radioactive… radioactive…"*

"– you, Canary."

At the sound of his name, Midoriya forced his eyes open. He met Mirio's instantly. Seeing him up on the surface, and out of danger, was more than a relief.

"You're ok…" Midoriya said with a groan, as he tried to figure out what had just happened. He found himself propped up against a large boulder-like structure. His head was spinning and eyes drooping, begging to block out the light of day once more. Without questioning his situation, Midoriya gripped onto the rock and hauled himself to his feet.

"It's ok, Canary," Mirio insisted, "The fight is over."

"O-Over?" Midoriya stammered. "Over…haul – where is –"

"About to be taken away," the older student nodded, pointing over

towards a collection of vehicles outside of the Yakuza stronghold. Memories came back in shards as Midoriya recalled clambering up here during his battle against Overhaul.

“And E-Eri?” he stammered after a moment of thought.

Mirio nodded. “She’s ok – unconscious, but ok.”

Midoriya let out a sigh of relief.

“O-Oh, and…”

Midoriya blinked as Mirio reached for his utility belt. In one of the little pockets there, now deprived of emergency medical equipment, was a little bundle of red cloth. He pulled it out and handed it over to Midoriya.

The familiar weight made Midoriya inhale sharply as he undid the little package.

“Careful –” Mirio insisted, holding his hands forwards as if to stop him.

Midoriya met his eyes for a moment, before slowly returning to the ripped piece of cape, and what was concealed inside of it –

– Siren.

Too many times, had Midoriya found himself in a situation where the little green bird was found stained red, with a slightly crooked wing and a disgruntled expression. But this time was… different.

As soon as her eyes were uncovered, she made a break for freedom, which she failed due to her injury. Midoriya almost fell over in his attempts to catch her. She didn’t give up though and continued to fight desperately.

“Something’s wrong with her,” Mirio explained. “Maybe she’s scared – or maybe it was something to do with that bullet. I don’t know – but it’s a miracle she’s still alive.”

Well, that was Siren for you.

But this… wasn’t… *Siren.*

“S-Siren – please!” Midoriya exclaimed as she wrestled from his grip once more. She didn’t get far through the air before she tumbled to

the ground. Now lying face up with her legs waving about, Midoriya crouched down in front of her. She stopped moving as she cocked her head to one side and looked up at him.

He sat there for a few minutes, just staring at her – until his vision went blurry.

Somehow, he *knew* what was wrong. But he didn't want to admit it to himself.

The melancholy was broken though, with a cry from Mirio. Midoriya barely acknowledged his fading footfalls for a few, uncharted moments, until he finally turned his head.

There, amongst the growing crowd of officials, a man was hauled onto a stretcher by Uraraka, whose hands here shaking – coming away stained red. The paramedics hid the full situation from view, but from the spike protruding from the injured man's stomach, Midoriya quickly realised the truth.

– it was Nighteye.

His breathing became shallow as he watched the paramedics move around him frantically. Some comforted Uraraka and pulled her gingerly away, whilst others held back Mirio. The remainder attended to Nighteye himself, assessing the full extent of the damage as quickly as they could.

Midoriya turned back to Siren.

It took only a few milliseconds more for him to steady his wobbling lip. Siren was hopping around on the rubble limply now, paying him little attention. She was slowing down, losing a lot of blood.

He had to fix this – h-he had to *fix* this! What about Eri's Quirk…? No, *no* – Eri's unconscious – she has no control and it's unfair on her… Midoriya's Quirk is volatile – like hers, but he *does* have control – and potential… potential to reverse this – w-whatever that bullet did to Siren…

Ok, ok, ok, ok –

“SIR NIGHTEYE – *NO!”* was Mirio’s hoarse shout.

Focus – focus –

“*No* – you gotta *live!* You *can’t* die on me, Sir. *No…”*

Err… Reverse… Undo… H-Heal…

“We need to get him straight to the hospital, please, back away –”

Heal – R-Rewind – *Fix…*

Tears spilled down Midoriya’s face, still watching Siren, who had now sat down, ignoring him, as she weakly tried to groom her injured side. He *couldn’t* look over at Nighteye.

~Fix You – Coldplay~

“*When you try your best but you don’t succeed…”* Midoriya sang softly, his voice catching slightly in his throat. “*When you get what you want, but not w-what you need…”*

Siren tucked her head under her wing. Her little body shaking and slipping on the rock. Was she dying? Would taking her to a vet mean anything at this point…? They wouldn’t prioritise getting her there, over the devastatingly injured heroes behind him.

“*Stuck in… r-reverse…”*

Midoriya took a deep breath as he continued, he couldn’t help his tears. He often couldn’t… This was most certainly not an exception. There was *so* much going on – too many situations around him, above him, probably below him… Dire… situations…

He just hoped that this song wouldn't just make rivers run from his eyes – more tears than there were already… rather than what he wanted it to do. He'd done his best to ensure that Radioactive did what he wanted it to do, but he had less control over what song did what, than he had initially thought.

"*Could be worse…?"*

But as the chorus began, he tilted his head away from Siren. He felt like the sound of the world around him was all but null. All he could hear was his song, despite the distant cries and yells from the world around him. It seemed to move in slow motion, as his friends at the sight of Nighteye, and now even Kirishima and Amajiki, as they too returned, battered and bruised. They were hauled onto stretchers – the ambulances and their crews rushing around as efficiently as they could, yet they still hadn't got Nighteye moving. But amongst the sound, that persistent thought crawled to the front of Midoriya's mind… a thought that said maybe he could –

"… fix you."

He stood up, tears blurring his vision. He stood there for a moment, ignoring the slight tremble of his legs and the throbbing of his head. It took nearly all the strength he had left, to turned on his heel and pull himself away from Siren; each footstep was harder than the last over the unsteady ground. But he knew that this was the right thing to do. It was the only thing that drove him forwards.

He didn't know Nighteye well. He couldn't say that he was his favourite hero either… He was stern and seemed to be rather fickle and difficult, from the few situations where they'd found themselves in each other's company. None of that mattered though.

"*But high up above or down below…"*

Focus all his power on Nighteye – everything he had. It might be his only chance to live through this; he was in the most trouble. Midoriya *knew* he had already reached his limit; he was tired; his whole body threatened to crumple to the ground at any second.

"*– but if you never try, you'll never know…"*

He was at Nighteye's side now. The gathering crowd parted and the paramedics stopped in their tracks, watching Midoriya's hand drift over to Nighteye's side, as the hero's weak eyes watched on in morbid curiosity.

"*Lights will guide…"*

They spilled off his hand – the lights – drifting like the seeds of a dandelion around them. A few landed on Nighteye, around the rock that persisted to protrude from his stomach. They melted with a brighter glow before simmering out of view. Midoriya's eyes were so blurry, that he couldn't quite make out if he was doing anything…

"*– fix you."*

He was humming the instrumental now – as frantic ambulance workers conversed and decided to remove the spike. The song was at its weakest at the moment, but there was nothing Midoriya could do about that… They had to get the foreign object out of him if Midoriya ever hoped to let his power do *anything* worthwhile.

He felt a hand on his shoulder. It was Uraraka – tears were spilling down her cheeks too, as she picked up the tune, and started to sing along. She had to look away though, as the spike was removed. Midoriya couldn't bring himself to, and simply watched as those dwindling lights found themselves attracted magnetically to the injury, falling like glowing rain – or tears…

No… rain – rain like when he first used his Quirk. The droplets fell like fire from the heavens, a healing wish – proof of how far he'd come. Oh, and how *far* that was…

Asui hopped over. In her hands, was a green creature of a hue ever so slightly different to that of her hero costume. Siren, who else could it be?

One light landed on the tip of her beak, which made her shake her head and blink. But Midoriya wafted his hand, preventing anymore from travelling in her direction. He couldn't risk Nighteye's death…

He let his power swell with the music. The golden glow reminded him of Eri, but perhaps that was why it presented itself as such… But it didn't do much to the hole in Nighteye's stomach, not without the chorus or words, that was where his power truly originated from… So, he had to keep going, even though Midoriya was now gripping onto the side of the stretcher in a desperate bid to keep himself upright and standing. Every glow of light felt like it was tapping the energy from himself and transporting it to Nighteye. Perhaps he would have been able to hold on a little more securely, if he knew he had the capability to save Siren too.

Oh, *Siren*… She meant so much to Midoriya. No one else could ever truly understand how much she'd done for him… He let himself smile, only slightly, as he told himself – all heroes, have heroes of their own. No matter their shape, size, meaning or worth to others – to him, they'd shine as brightly as stars. They were his wings – he could never have learnt to fly without them.

"*Tears stream… down your face – when you lose you something you cannot replace…"*

The glow really wasn't rain anymore – now it moved like the waves at high tide, lapping up against Nighteye, as the hero's gaze reflected that glow in one of marvel and awe. Midoriya wondered what he saw in him…

"*– and I…"*

Uraraka was still humming the tune from the instrumental on repeat, and Asui soon joined in. She was standing just behind him, holding Siren close and out of sight. Maybe she had come to the same conclusion as Midoriya. But… this was starting to work now – at least, make a visible difference. It *had* to…

"*– I promise you I will learn from my mistakes…"*

Mirio was crouching down on the other side of the stretcher. It didn't take long for Midoriya to realise… he knew the song. The older hero student took a shaky breath and started to sing too, if not quietly. Midoriya wasn't even sure if the words really fell from his mouth, or if he was simply mouthing them, too weak from emotion to force them out.

But Midoriya… he was weak too.

He fell to his knees.

"*L-Lights will guide… you home…"*

He let his mind wander back to the burning sunset on Dagobah beach, so long ago… He never thought… that would ever lead to this.

"*And I will try… to fix –*

“…y-you.”

And a world as black as Siren’s eyes, swallowed him whole, lulling him into a deep… merciful sleep…

Chapter End Notes

Songs used in this chapter:

(Over the Rainbow – Judy Garland – cover by Connie Talbot

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pe6KVIqR1UU)

Radioactive – Imagine Dragons

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAEUnn0HNLM

Fix You – Coldplay

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oncu0bgdcXU

Some explanation:

1. Nighteye’s Quirk is counteracted by Eri’s, because Eri rewinds time, and that affects the logic of Nighteye’s vision of the future. If Eri’s Quirk hadn’t activated when she was frightened by seeing Canary fight Overhaul, ‘Uraraka’ wouldn’t have been reverted back to Toga, Eri wouldn’t have cried out and she would have been taken. Then, Midoriya’s song would have ended and wouldn’t defeat Overhaul.

2. Midoriya had to be very careful on what song he used against Overhaul. His Quirk works on other people if the sound reaches them. If there’s a lot of noise going on, this doesn’t work as well. It would probably be safer if he used a power that affected himself rather than others. It’s easier for him to direct that

anyways, and not accidently hurt Eri. Also, he didn't know until he started singing that Chisaki didn't understand his words. If he attempted a sleeping song here, and failed, he would be *very* screwed.

3. Radioactive. I used this because, well, *I really wanted to use it* – I thought it would be cool, was a bit of a contrast to the other songs Midoriya had used, and I think it relates to Midoriya's time with the villain's, and Eri's too… Overhaul's vision of the future and even Midoriya's Quirk. I liked that.
Midoriya's *emotions* really affected what power this gave. He's not just… emitting radiation – this is a more, cartoon-ish ability… If you think – nuclear power, radioactivity, you get glowly green toxic stuff and blowy up stuff and all that glory. Think a little deeper and you realise radioactivity can pull apart stuff, destroying DNA and stuff. Midoriya's not… *thinking* much about the science behind all this, and he's done that on purpose. That was the aim of his experimentation with it all – could he warp whatever power it gave by *not overthinking everything before he tried it?* A challenge for him, obviously – which he did to occupy himself. He's always been doing that, bottling up emotions and instead focusing his head on studying… All in all, it's got to be a healthy way forward! R-Right?!
Anyways, Midoriya wanted to use Radioactive because Chisaki freaking deserved it. And he used up more of his songs than he thought he would beforehand.

Some of this will be repeated again!

ART!

Thelovypop17 did the same thing!

littlemusic…meiyou has returned with a lovely drawing for Midoriya and Eri!

Pigeonat went ahead and drew what Canary's social media could look like XD

Then Syra Eerie finished their Safe and Sound drawing!

And I wrestled with trying to figure out how to get a link off Tumblr for like 10 minutes until **JusTAFictioN** saved me – it's a sketch of Canary by **MochaKat**

Also, I was speaking to someone on Tumblr (Tumblr is frightening), and I thought I might explain something –

So, Discord – it really confused me at first and I didn't understand what it was – so, for people who *don't* understand, it's kind of like a messaging thing where the server owner (me) has a lot more control over what's going on? Like, we have the rules we want to implement and custom emojis and stupid roles and stuff. Signing up is free – you can pay money for Discord Nitro and that'll let you do some extra stuff but I don't do it. The whole idea is for people to talk and write and play and send art… relevant for Canary or not. So yeah, when authors go on about that and you're like *what the heck even is Discord anyways??* It's that.

…join us.

No space here for more art

The End of the Beginning

Chapter Notes

> Ok, so - I had another look at my chapter plan, and realised I have not planned this chapter - GOOD JOB PAST ME!
>
> Update, I have now planned the next -
> wait
> oh
> wait I have 2 chapters left - 3, make that 3.
>
> The major plot arcs have been completed! Satisfaction on nearly all plot points attempted - 3 chapters including this one are planned - but not promised! There could be more, you know what I'm like.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There was a ringing in his ears, like what came after Kacchan's explosions. It took Midoriya back for a moment. He half expected to wake up with his head down on the desk of his old school, with Kacchan glaring down at him with a sinister smile on his face, whilst the teacher scolded Midoriya for sleeping during class – which had happened more than once. He used to stay up too late studying. All in all, it was a recipe for disaster.

But that was then.

Midoriya woke up in a hospital, which honestly, made him feel better than the thought of waking up back in middle school. He didn't acknowledge it was a hospital for a few minutes though, as he just lay there, staring at the white-washed ceiling, blinking slowly as his senses came into focus.

"*–And welcome back to Put Your Hands Up Radio! It is six thirty, so welcome to Canary's hour!"* came the high-pitched sound of a vaguely familiar, female voice.

Midoriya turned his head for his tired eyes to rest on an old radio, propped up on his bedside table. It was eerily similar to the one he had when he was with the League of Villains.

"*Our wonderful star isn't here today – so instead, everyone give a warm welcome to Owl!"* said Minim, one of Present Mic's sidekicks. She did a lot of the radio shows when Present Mic was out patrolling or working at UA. So, where was he?

"*Hey – it's great to be back again,"* Jiro replied.

Midoriya zoned out from the radio. It became background noise to him as he groggily pulled himself upright. Glancing at the window, the curtains blowing softly in the cool breeze that drifted through, the sun was already setting.

He turned away from it, frowning. They had started the raid of the Shie Hassaikai at around eight o'clock in the morning… It was already six thirty at night? Wow – he slept through the entire day…

He started to stretch out his arms, which were aching and sore – which was when he hesitated, eyes wide.

Wait, if Jiro's on the radio – it had to be either Tuesday or Thursday…

And the raid had been on *Monday*.

Oh no.

The door creaked open slowly. Midoriya let his arms drop as he waited for whoever was behind it to reveal themselves. It turned out to be a nurse, who walked in on the tips of her toes, sliding her clipboard in onto an empty chair as quietly as she could. She still hadn't looked in Midoriya's direction.

"Err…" Midoriya ended up letting out of his mouth.

The sound made her do a double take, "Oh, you're awake!" she exclaimed. "Sorry, did I wake you up?"

"U-Um, no I –"

"I was trying so hard to be quiet – sorry!" she added in a mock whisper. "You've been sleeping for quite a while!"

"H-How long?" Midoriya questioned insistently, leaning forwards a little.

“Oh, about a day and a half?” she estimated, retrieving her clipboard as she kicked the door closed. “How are you feeling?”

He just blinked at her whilst she waited for an answer, “I’ve been asleep for a-a *day and a half?!”*

She cocked her head to one side, “Your teachers said that was a normal backlash for your Quirk after using it to this extent. Moreover, you had a pretty heavy concussion after passing out so quickly and bashing your head… You did wake up briefly this morning, and Recovery Girl came in to heal you up. You fell back to sleep right after.”

“I-It…” Midoriya stammered, “It’s usually not that bad…”

He had been practising his powers so much after school… Yeah, he did feel pretty bad afterwards, especially if he had been using the *entirety* of the songs, going all the way through them, and then moving straight onto another power… But really, he hadn’t experienced hard core usage of his power, in life or death scenarios, other than that time with Stain – which had left him unconscious for almost an entire day. Right – that was a similar amount of time to when Midoriya must have woken up for Recovery Girl… And the other… twelve-ish hours? Maybe that was because of the hero’s stamina sucking downside… Or what about Eri’s –

Eri.

“W-What happened to Eri?” Midoriya asked hurriedly, leaning forwards on his bed. He felt a lot more awake now these questions were buzzing around his mind.

“The little girl?” the nurse blinked as she unravelled a device to check Midoriya’s blood pressure. “I don’t have clearance to check on her, but she is here. She woke up a while ago now, but she has a bad fever and is being carefully monitored because of that Quirk of hers… I heard it could be pretty dangerous.”

“U-Um, yeah,” Midoriya sighed, holding out his arm to her for the blood pressure check.

He sat there in silence for a moment whilst she did what she needed to do. Midoriya stared at his phone, sitting just out of reach on his bedside table, next to the radio.

“– *always getting himself into some kind of trouble,”* laughed Jiro from

across the device. "*I'm sure he's fine – probably listening right now. Hey, Canary! Get back soon! I need to copy your English homework!*"

Midoriya grinned.

"You have such nice friends," the nurse smiled as she finished her checks. "But you seem fine to me! You just needed a rest. The hospital will be ok to *release you*, so to speak, in a few hours."

Midoriya nodded, his throat a little dry, "Thanks."

"No problem – I'll go and tell everyone you're awake. You might get some visitors in a bit," she explained, walking over to the door and pulling it open, "Sit tight!"

"…Yeah, thanks," he simply repeated as she left. Damn, he should have asked for some water or something – he was *parched.*

He flopped back down into his bed letting his arms fall to his sides as he stared back at the ceiling. He lay there for a few seconds more, before reaching over to his phone, not looking as he did so and almost dropping it in the process.

One glance at his influx of messages and he sighed deeply. He was about to tap on his *aria in the aviary* chat, when a call came in and he accidently clicked answer.

Without checking who it was, he put his phone to his ear, "Hello?"

"IZUKU!" yelled his mother.

Midoriya ran his free hand down his face, "Hey, Mum – sorry –"

"I was so worried!" she continued to exclaim, not letting Midoriya get a word in. "*I got a message from the school saying that you were participating with a rescue effort yesterday – and that you ended up in hospital!"*

"Mum, I'm *not* injured," he insisted, sitting up again. "It's just Quirk over usage; I'm *tired*, that's all."

"*Then why aren't you at UA?!"*

"Because… they just took everyone straight to the hospital and they must have just left me to sleep here instead of disturbing me."

"*B-But – you must have been asleep for over twenty-four hours!"*

“Yeah, yeah – I know,” Midoriya sighed, now rubbing his eyes, “I over did it – and overslept. Sorry.”

“*You don’t have to apologise, Izuku,”* she said softly. “*I’m just* worried *about you.”*

“You don’t have to be worried,” he smiled, although he knew there wasn’t much he could do to stop her. “Honestly, I’m *fine.”*

“…*Ok. But you have to* call *more often from now on, ok?!”*

“Ok.”

“Ok… H-How is everyone?”

“Err… Fine? Fine – I haven’t seen them since yesterday, but I’m pretty sure they’re ok…”

“*Eri? I-I’m guessing that’s what they meant by* rescue effort. *Is she ok? Did you find her?!”*

“Yeah… yeah – I haven’t seen her yet either, but apparently she’s here, in the hospital… So, hopefully I’ll get to see her in a bit.”

“*Oh, that’s good.”*

“Hm…”

“*What about Siren? Is she as loud as ever?”* his mother chuckled.

“Err… Siren…”

Midoriya bit his lip. Yeah, that was another question entirely…

“I… don’t know – she’s not here at the moment.”

“I’m sure she’s fine,” Inko assured.

But was she?

The bullet – that was a Quirk erasing bullet. It wasn’t golden like they had been when Midoriya was with the League of Villains, in that awful warehouse. It was red this time – red as the blood it drew. And there were so few of them… in a specialised case. A different version of the… formula? A… perfected version – one that could remove

Quirks *permanently*… Of course, it was all speculation. He didn't actually have an evidence of such. But nonetheless, there were a few conclusions that Midoriya's racing mind could draw from it:

- The bullet most certainly wasn't designed for a bird… He knew it caused serious damage to her, judging from her severe limp he had seen yesterday.
- Something had *definitely* affected her… cognitive abilities? She wasn't acting like *Siren*, the last Midoriya remembered. She was just hopping around like an ordinary, female canary – lacking in birdsong.
- Siren's abnormalities referred Midoriya to something he'd been considering on and off ever since he'd met her – that she had a slight *intelligence Quirk*… It wasn't really anything he could *prove* – except… for perhaps this.
- If that was a Quirk erasing bullet.
  It erased her Quirk.
  And left her, as just that – a female canary.

  Not Siren.

Midoriya, after a slight hesitation, nodded, briefly forgetting that, of course, Inko couldn't see that, "Y-Yeah. I'm sure you're right."

"*Ok, well, I won't disturb you any longer,"* his mother decided. *"But* call *me* – and *your father."*

"Of course, yeah – I will."

"*Bye, Izuku."*

"Bye," and he hung up with a deep sigh.

"*Ah* the *worries* of a loving parent."

Midoriya blinked and looked up to the door.

Leant against the doorframe, was a tall, bespectacled man, his blond hair tied roughly into a messy bun, "You won't escape it – not even when you're as old and grey as me!"

"Present Mic!" Midoriya exclaimed, tossing his covers aside and

leaping off the bed, running straight into his arms.

“Hey there, little listener!” he replied as he hugged him tight. “You know, I never *did* come up with a good alliteration for co-host… What do you think?”

Midoriya just shrugged as he stepped back from him, beaming.

“W-Why aren’t you on the radio?”

“I’m here to see you, my… *clever* co-host?” he said with an unsure look on his face, letting the door swing closed.

Midoriya just shook his head, still grinning.

“Yeah, fair – that one was weak… How about *confident* co-host!”

“*Really?”*

“*Charismatic –”*

“None of these are words that describe me very well!”

“Cheerful!”

“Have you seen any of the others?!” Midoriya interjected, retrieving his phone from his bed and shoving it in his jacket pocket. The jacket had been hanging off the end of the bed. He was still in his hero costume, which wasn’t actually that battered, considering the ordeal it had been through.

He pulled his arms through the jacket as Present Mic spoke, “Sure have! I just came back from speaking to Eri after that nice nurse said you were up!”

“You were with Eri?!”

“I’m… guessing you’re keen to see her?” he supposed with a grin almost as wide as Midoriya’s.

“I-I – I mean, can I?!”

Present Mic tossed the door open once again, “Right this way, my charming co-host!”

“Ok, it’s time to stop –”

"My *creative –*"

"*Stop!*"

Eri's room wasn't far away. They were in some kind of university hospital; Present Mic had explained. It was lower profile than bigger hospitals in the immediate area, which was perfect for keeping it on the down-low that well known heroes such as Ryukyu and, well, *Canary* had paid the place a visit, if not briefly. More importantly though, it meant that Eri could be kept out of the public eye. The Shie Hassaikai may no longer be much of a problem, but the League of Villains was still out there.

"I'm afraid they didn't get far though," Present Mic said, which made Midoriya do a double take.

"W-What? The League?" he frowned.

The hero looked back at him and sheepishly rubbed his head, "No… Well, yes *and* no – I was talking about the thugs from the Yakuza."

"…What about them?" Midoriya pressed as they came to a halt outside what was *probably* the door to Eri's room, isolated from the rest of the hospital.

"The transport on the way to Tartarus was intercepted by the League," Present Mic admitted with a sigh. "Shigaraki took the remaining Quirk erasing bullets – and Overhaul's arms too."

Midoriya blinked at him, "His *arms?!* What about the rest of him…?"

"Now in prison," he said with raised eyebrows.

Midoriya looked at the floor, thinking back to –

"Stick to your own ways to achieve your goals; I'll stay out of your hair," Overhaul had drawled. "But… if you want some of those bullets – a few every month, perhaps. A sort of alliance. I owe your side an arm, after all."

"And in return?" Shigaraki had growled in reply.

“Canary.”

“You alright, Canary?” Present Mic questioned.

Midoriya blinked, “U-Um, yeah – sorry, just… thinking…”

“We can go back to your room if you want,” he offered, concerned eyes glancing down at him over the top of his glasses.

He shook his head, eyes now fixed on the door in front of him, “No, I-I’d like to see Eri. If that’s ok…”

Present Mic nodded, “I just thought it would be best that you knew.”

“Thank you,” Midoriya replied as his teacher reached for the doorknob.

“Canary!” exclaimed Eri the moment she lay eyes on Midoriya.

He grinned as she leapt off her bed and charged towards him, hugging him gently as soon as she reached him.

“I’m so glad you’re ok,” Midoriya whispered into her ear before pulling away and standing up straight again, he’d had to bend down to let her reach him.

The little girl, now dressed in far more comfortable clothing than the rags she had supplied to her when she was with the villains, pulled at her sleeves and clenched her eyes tight shut, “I-I-I’m so sorry that y-you got hurt and it’s m-my fault and –”

“Eri!” Midoriya interjected, shaking his head. “None of this is your fault. It’s not your fault that anyone got hurt at *all*. That’s all Overhaul. Don’t listen to what he said to you. He’s a villain, and he’s in p-prison now. He can’t hurt you anymore.”

She blinked up at him unsurely, glancing at Present Mic too, who Midoriya wasn’t sure she recognised out of his hero costume, but he could have been babysitting her in his civilian getup at some point, that seemed likely enough.

“A-And what about you?” she asked in the softest voice possible, rosy red eyes full of concern.

Midoriya just smiled pitifully, “No, of course not. He can’t hurt either of us – or anyone else, for that matter.”

He reached out for her hand, which she quickly took, and he led her back to her bed, helping her up onto it. She sat on her knees beside Midoriya, whilst Present Mic took the chair near by.

“Are you feeling better, Eri?” questioned the hero in his more compassionate voice, rather than that excitable, loud tone he often adopted.

Eri instinctively reached up and tapped the end of her horn. It was significantly smaller than Midoriya remembered it being. She just nodded in reply, and that was the end of that conversation.

Eri didn’t seem to have quite finished with their previous one, though, “What about the other villains?” she asked, turning back to Midoriya.

He supposed she meant the League. They were still out there… Who knows how long they’ll be like that – and what they planned next. But… secretly…

…Midoriya rather looked forward to confronting them again.

“They can’t hurt you either,” Midoriya smiled. “Not with me around, and all the heroes too. They’ll be super careful now.”

“For sure, little listener,” Present Mic nodded. “We’ll go back to UA in a few hours and you’ll be safer than ever! Canary too.”

She didn’t say anything more for a moment, just sitting there and fiddling with her thumbs, deep in thought. She opened her mouth a few times, as if she wanted to tell him something, but wasn’t sure how. Then, she furrowed her brow, looked up to Midoriya, and raised her hands.

[*You are a hero*]

Midoriya grinned brilliantly, and repeated exactly what she said, “*You’re* the hero to me, Bluebird,” he beamed.

There was the slightest of smiles on her lips, there for only a fraction of a second, but Midoriya could see it, [*I want hero*]

He tried not to frown, but he wasn’t quite sure what she meant, until she tried a little more sign:

[*Can I hero like you?*]

Wait – wait, was she asking if *she could be a hero?*

“You want to be a hero?” he questioned unsurely.

She balled her little fists together for a moment, and then looked up to him with such determination in her eyes, and nodded, “Like you.”

He wasn’t going to cry, no, absolutely not what are you talking about that would be ridiculous why would that make him –

And he cried.

He didn’t let her see though, and pulled her in close to his chest to hug her tightly. Present Mic spied the tears welling at his eyes though. He grinned stupidly at him, and Midoriya rubbed them away with the back of his hand, before signing to his teacher to [*Shut up*] without Eri noticing.

Once he’d sufficiently recovered, he let Eri go from her hug, “Of course, you can be a hero, *Miss Miracle,”* he teased, poking her in the shoulder. “To be a hero, all you need confidence – and conviction. Then, you can do *anything*.”

The smile was definitely there now.

“… *Convicting co-”*

“Oh, my God – *stop!”*

He opened his eyes, which struggled to adjust to the dull light of the room.

He didn’t remain like that for long, staring at the ceiling.

His head protested as he sat bolt upright, blood rushing from it as the whole room span around and around…

What – no – this… wasn’t how he…

The furious beeping of the heart monitor to his right ripped him from his dizzying thoughts. Only then was he painfully aware of the amount of wires and tubes that ran from the side of his stomach and over towards the numerous machines that surrounded the heart monitor.

This wasn't… the future he saw.

The world eventually stopped spinning and he was reminded that he was still on land, and not out at sea. Now, Sir Nighteye cast his eyes towards clock. It was always the first thing on his mind – time.

It was almost seven, but of course, he couldn't be sure what day he had found himself in.

He felt his heart beat faster – he didn't need those rhythmic sounds to tell him so.

The waters he was in now –

– were completely uncharted.

If he were in waters… that is – no, he most certainly was still on solid Earth – hard, stone cold reality, immoveable… unchangeable… destiny.

He looked down at his hands. One was wrapped in thick bandages, the other was bare, exposed to the light.

Nighteye once believed that these hands cast the future in an unbendable resin. Something he could see but not touch. Try as hard as he might to change its shape, he simply did not have the power.

He was right – but also, so terribly wrong.

He didn't have that power. For it was the will of others – their determination – their *stubbornness* – that made the difference. When they were more immovable than the future itself…

Tweet, tweet!

Nighteye jumped. The machines around him protested loudly for it.

Fumbling for his glasses, which he was sure were sitting ready for him on his bedside table (if they weren't, he'd be in trouble). The world came into even greater focus as he slipped them on.

Tweet!

The hero blinked at a tiny, green ball of feathers, perched on the end of his hospital bed.

He frowned, "You're… Canary's pet – why are you – *OUCH!"*

The bird had hopped down off the metal frame of the bed, and harshly bit Nighteye's exposed toe.

"What was *that* for?!" he exclaimed.

Chirp.

"… You're… not a pet?"

Tweet!

Nighteye hesitated for a moment, his brow furrowed as he stared at her through narrowed eyes.

…was he having a conversation with a bird?

"Where's… Midoriya?" he asked, recalling the young hero's name. He was even younger than Mirio. Too young to have been through what he had; seen what he had seen of this harsh reality.

Tweet, tweet.

Nighteye had no idea what that meant, "Ok… What are you doing here?"

Peep!

He didn't know why he even asked that question.

"…Go on – shoo!"

The bird just cocked its head to one side.

"Shoo!" Nighteye repeated. "You're not supposed to be in here – how did you even get *in?* Get out!"

It just blinked at him.

Right, the bird wasn't going to understand him either, was it?

Nighteye supposed it was going to have to spend some time with him now, until it could be reunited with its owner – um, *companion*… he supposed.

The hero sighed and lay back down, rubbing at his temples, his eyes closed as he tried to think over the events leading up to this – and what had changed to allow him to live. A few moments later, he wrinkled his nose in some kind of irritation. He opened his eyes, and zeroed in on a patterned, green face of a curious bird.

"Get… off…" he said slowly.

The bird just headbutted his glasses, and then hopped down off his nose, walked across his face, and settled onto the cushion beside him contently.

Nighteye stared at it.

Maybe he *was* dead – perhaps they were *both* dead – him and the bird. None of this made much sense anyway, so it was a logical conclusion to make.

Either way, he had now found himself lying beside a nestled, green canary that he had absolutely no connection to, listening to the whirr of the machines keeping his condition stable.

"…I'd like to thank your companion – friend, Midoriya," Nighteye said after a while. The bird had been pecking at the pillow cover and trying to rip it up. It was strangely therapeutic to watch. But she had stopped now, at his words. It really did make him think that she could understand.

Nighteye sighed and averted his gaze back to the ceiling, "He showed me something I didn't think possible – that… his future was entirely under his control. My Quirk… perhaps it just shows the most *likely*

future. But there are outliers – rare possibilities that you can only reach if you put all your heart and soul into making it so – and others must too. If every major event in the timeline, has only a… ninety-percent chance of occurring, then the further down this timeline we go, the less likely any major event is to happen, considering the chance of the *last* one not actually occurring… So, that means – events that I see very far into the future, are… much less likely to happen than I first expected… Of course, that's only one hypothesis.

"There's the act of the girl's Quirk that we must consider too. Rewind – so, it affects time. Does that mean it affects my Quirk too? Can my ability see the reversing effect of hers? Or do they fundamentally contradict each other?

"What do you think?"

The bird stared back at him.

Tweet!

He sighed, "Yeah, that's what I thought too."

There was a knock on his door.

"Come in," Nighteye responded, as if on habit to answering the door to his office. But instead, he was in a hospital, with a *bird*.

The door was thrown open with some surprise. The man behind it wore an expression that matched the action, but Nighteye didn't recognise him, and he didn't appear to be a nurse or doctor.

"You're awake!" the man exclaimed. Ah, his voice was rather familiar – the man from the radio – Present Mic. "We heard voices, and we thought there was a nurse in here with you or something!"

"Ah…" Nighteye cleared his throat, "No – um, that was me. I was just… talking to..."

"*Siren?!*"

From behind the man who Nighteye *assumed* was Present Mic, came the short, green haired form of one, Izuku Midoriya – Canary.

The bird – Siren, he remembered her name now – quite literally threw herself off the bed, spread her wings, and soared across the hospital room, landing in the hands that Canary threw before him, catching the little creature with a gleeful smile. Nighteye was quite sure there were tears in his eyes.

"You're *ok!"* he said in obvious disbelief, raising the bird up to his eyelevel to gaze at her lovingly. It was sweet.

"Sorry," Present Mic whispered to Nighteye, hurrying over to his side. "We were just with Eri, and she was talking about Siren. She said she had been with her nearly all day until she disappeared earlier."

Nighteye ran his hand through his hair, "I don't know how long she's been here… longer than I've been awake, for sure. She might have gotten shut in."

Canary was *definitely* crying now, talking animatedly to the bird about not thinking his Quirk worked on her and him trying to focus his power on Nighteye instead but his emotion clearly got the better of him and –

"You saved me," Nighteye realised.

Canary stopped chattering away to his bird immediately. She was still cupped in his hands, as he turned to the hero, "U-Um, well, I tried…"

Nighteye just stared at him. Slowly, he let a small smile spread across his lips, "You did a good job."

"…Thank you."

It was in this moment, that a couple of nurses *finally* reached the room to check on Nighteye. They were rather surprised by the visitors he had received in the short space of time since they were obviously last here – *especially* by the bird, who had now hopped onto Canary's shoulder as he desperately explained that he was to leave the hospital very soon and he would take her with him.

"– I didn't know where she was I-I'm really sorry I swear she –"

Present Mic let out a small laugh as he leant against Nighteye's bedside. He looked over to him for an explanation of what amused him so.

Present Mic nodded towards the boy, "He's gonna make a change, you

know. All Might's gone, and someone's gotta fill the gap. I believe *he's* the one who can do it."

Nighteye looked to him too, watching him and the little creature whose beady eyes now once again met the hero's own.

He had always thought Mirio would be the one to be the next symbol of peace. It was a logical conclusion. He was strong, powerful – mentally, physically, and in his several Quirks. He had never considered there may be someone else out there who could rival him, even the *slightest* bit.

But… if there was one thing that Canary had taught him, the future wasn't set in stone.

Nighteye smiled, knowing that maybe this time, he had the chance to see that future – whatever it may be – *without* his Quirk.

"S-So, maybe – well, this is just my thought I could be *completely* wrong – well, there was just one light – from the song I used on Nighteye? One of the lights reached Siren because Asui was holding her. I didn't *want* the song to help her because I was really worried that Sir Nighteye was going to die and I didn't have much strength left and I wanted to make sure that I gave everything I had to save him and I didn't know if I could *possibly* save both of them so I didn't want to risk it! But, w-well – back in the Sports Festival, I got really emotional in, um, a *couple* of songs, and it *massively* enhanced what I thought I could do – and maybe this time, I was really emotional and even that one light that reached Siren was enough to reverse the damage!"

Present Mic blinked at Midoriya, who quickly realised that had all spilled out very quickly.

"I *absolutely* agree!" his teacher replied eventually.

"…You have no idea what I just said, do you?"

"…No, not at all."

"That's what I thought."

The two of them were back at UA now. Eri held tightly onto Midoriya's hand, taking several steps to only one of his, as the three of them – four, including Siren – wandered back over towards Heights Alliance after a *very* long few days.

"So, if you guys meet up with your friends," Present Mic suggested as they reached the door, "I'll go find Eraser and then he can pick up Eri for the night. Sound like a deal?"

Midoriya nodded and waved, "See you in a bit!"

The door closed behind him, and he was hit by a sudden realisation. It was very, *very* –

– quiet.

"Where is everybody?" Eri questioned, a tang of fear in her tone of voice.

"I… don't know," Midoriya admitted.

All the lights were on. He walked around the common room area with Eri a couple of times, spying discarded jumpers and random pieces of paper – even a couple of abandoned phones. Nope, something was *definitely* up.

But then he spotted on the table, a bright purple guitar pick, decorated with black skull and crossbones.

He picked it up and turned it over in his hand, examining it closely. The only person this could *possibly* belong to was Jiro. But there was no guitar in sight.

With a frown, Midoriya's gaze automatically shifted over to the edge of the sofa, specifically, just underneath. He'd seen… Shinso kick a guitar underneath – not that long ago now. It was weird, but Midoriya had just decided to ignore the peculiar encounter and leave them all to it.

Now, his curiosity finally got the better of him.

"Want to go on an adventure to find them?" he questioned Eri.

Gripping his hand tighter, Eri nodded.

He passed her the guitar pick, which she was quickly entranced by, and they left the dorms as quickly as they had entered.

“Ok, where do you think they could be?” Midoriya asked the little girl beside him. He was painfully aware that the last time ‘he’ had taken Eri out for a little ‘adventure’ – it had really been Toga, and she was taken back to the villains she feared. So, to make sure she was comfortable, Midoriya let *Eri* take the lead.

After a moment of *intense* thought, Eri clenched her fist around the guitar pick, and marched off ahead, pulling Midoriya with her. He laughed, “I have a feeling you know more than me!”

Siren flew along beside them as Eri walked Midoriya through the grounds of UA. She clearly knew where she was going – and she was surprisingly fast for someone with such little legs.

It didn’t take long for Midoriya to *hear* something *very* interesting – music. It was music he recognised – lyrics familiar to him too. But it felt rather out of place – what on *Earth* was going on?

When Eri had finally reached her destination, Midoriya’s mouth fell open in shock.

Before him, was every single member of his class – *including Kacchan* – all gathered on some kind of *stage.* Many were wearing gym clothes, or just UA’s traditional PE kit, whilst others sported something less suited for moving around, and instead, held various *instruments.*

“– and then we’ll have Uraraka with her Quirk above the crowd. But we’re only allowed to do that with the proper safety implications, so Sero can use his tape to act as safety wires for anyone who ends up floating –” Midoriya caught Yaoyorozu’s words as Eri excitably hurried towards them.

“Err, don’t look now,” were Shinso’s words, which immediately make *everyone* look in Midoriya’s direction.

“W-What’s going on?” he questioned, *gaping* at the scene before him, which slowly morphed into a brilliant smile.

“ERI!” Jiro cried.

“Oh, Eri!” Yaoyorozu added, crouching down to let her run into her arms after Eri stumbled up the stairs to the stage.

“Ok, everyone we care about is here,” Shinso grinned, looking away from Midoriya.

“You’re forgetting someone…!” Midoriya replied dramatically, shrugging Siren off his shoulder.

“Oh, my God guys, it’s Satan herself.”

Mina screamed.

Midoriya wasn’t sure if she was being melodramatic or not – not until she collapsed into the invisible arms of Hagakure, pretending to be killed by Siren’s mere presence.

Still gazing around in awe, Midoriya followed Eri’s path up to the stage, “What *is* this?” he asked now that the reunion was over and done with.

“Siren’s ok!” Uraraka said, completely ignoring Midoriya’s persistent questions.

“You had us really worried there, ribbit,” added Asui.

“Good to see that you’re alright too,” grinned Kirishima.

“A-And you,” Midoriya nodded. The last he’d seen of Kirishima, he was wearing an awful lot more bandages than he did now. “But seriously –”

“It’s just Culture Festival stuff, obviously,” Jiro said, rolling her eyes as she cooed over Siren and Eri.

“…Obviously,” Midoriya repeated. “Um, what’s the Culture Festival again?”

“Ah, come *on*, Canary!”

“It’s like you’ve been too busy or something –”

“Do you even *listen* in homeroom?!”

His classmates berated him with mocking comments, grinning all the while, so Midoriya was *pretty sure* they were joking.

“We are preparing our part for the school!” Iida explained – always right to the point, which was just what Midoriya needed.

“Which *you’re* not allowed to know about!” added Uraraka, who passed Siren over to the nearest person to her – which turned out to be Kacchan – who tossed her over to Kirishima like she was a hot iron or something – and started to push Midoriya out of the group.

“W-Why not?!” he exclaimed, *very* confused.

“Because it’s a surprise!” Hagakure squealed, bouncing up and down.

“Well, it’s not much of a *surprise* anymore now, is it?” Sero laughed.

“You’re doing a music thing?” Midoriya realised eagerly. Well, he’d *already* realised that much, but he hadn’t been too sure *why*.

“Well, yeah,” Jiro responded, twiddling her earphone jacks around her fingers nervously.

“Jiro’s doing the music and singing and *I’m* the chief choreographer!” exclaimed Mina, who had now resurrected herself after Siren’s presence *‘killed’* her.

Midoriya was more than stunned – and terribly excited, “H-How long have you been doing this?!”

“Since before the whole… voice thing came back,” admitted Jiro. “We weren’t sure what the future was going to be like for you… and we thought we’d… try our best to cheer you up.”

He was going to cry – he’d cried way too many times today – this is a *problem.*

“Ahhh!” Mina suddenly cried out, pulling at her horns. “This is too much! Can’t he join in?!”

“But the *surprise!”* Hagakure reminded her, tapping her repeatably on the shoulder, which Midoriya could only see because of the way it moved Mina’s hair.

“W-Well…” Jiro hummed, “We haven’t actually finalised the very end of it…”

“Midoriya could do like, a surprise appearance for the last chorus,” shrugged Shinso – who really *was* holding a guitar. Midoriya looked at it, and then to him, and grinned stupidly.

“Shut up,” Shinso said, rolling his eyes. He was smiling too, though.

“Only if everyone’s in agreement!” Iida quickly intervened. “Of course, it’s ultimately up to Midoriya!”

“It kind of goes against the whole point of –” started Hagakure, who still seemed *very* keen to go through with this whole ‘surprise’ idea.

“C-Can I?!” Midoriya replied to Iida eagerly, eyes wide as he turned to Jiro, who seemed to be in charge of all this.

Eri tugged at the end of Yaoyorozu’s skirt, “Can he?”

Shinso pointed at Eri, “You can’t say no to that face. That’s literally impossible.”

Jiro grinned, “True.”

“He can?” Eri repeated with a slight pout, Midoriya wondered whether she put it on purposely, which made him *slightly* proud, in a weird way.

“Of course!”

The little smile was worth the trouble.

Mina immediately grabbed onto Midoriya’s shoulders and turned him around, like Uraraka had attempted earlier, “It is *exactly* three past eight and we therefore have twenty-seven minutes until we need to wrap it up for the evening – go get changed out of your hero outfit and get your butt back here!” she drilled like an army sergeant.

“B-But I –”

“Go, go, go!” she insisted, pushing him towards the stairs, which he fortunately didn’t fall down.

“You can move faster than that, Midoriya!” Shinso called after him as he started to jog down the stairs.

Midoriya laughed and started to run back down the path towards the dorms.

“WE CAN SEE YOU WALKING!” yelled Mina.

“I’M NOT WALKING,” Midoriya shouted back, and he continued to run all the way towards Heights Alliance, bumping into Present Mic and Mr Aizawa on his way over.

“Are you ok, Canary?!” Present Mic questioned worriedly, seeing him, out of breath, without Eri, and outside.

“Oh – yeah – I’m just going to get changed to help the others with their… Culture Festival thing – Eri’s with them,” he panted. He gave Mr Aizawa a wave, who thankfully also seemed perfectly alright after the ordeal he had been through during the raid and continued off into the dorms.

The two teachers were still there, waiting for him, when he returned, not long after, in his new gym gear, that he *really* hadn’t had the opportunity to put much use into yet.

“Is… everything alright?” he asked as he hesitated before them.

Present Mic just beamed, “Absolutely.”

Midoriya blinked at him, nodded, and then took off at a jog back towards where class 1-A’s stage had been.

“YOU TOOK YOUR TIME!” Mina exclaimed.

Midoriya laughed as he ran back to the stage.

“So,” he sighed, grinning wildly, “What now?”

Chapter End Notes

Look at that my friends.

That is not a cliff hanger.

That, is a calm, *normal* end to a chapter. I didn’t think that was possible.

It is also rather late the night before uploading. So, I could just be blind – I’m *pretty* sure it’s not a cliff – ok, whatever. I’m not changing it.

Art Section!

FiveInBinaryOr101 did this – *sigh* – *meme* – because I said I hate the word 'angst', which was evidently, a mistake.

Look at Big Bird The Terrorist's doodle as me as a cloud cat!

Thelovypop17 has Midoriya crying over Siren :(But she *also* has, a happy, dancing Midoriya!

This is **Pigeonat**'s mini comic – 'She saved me!' – I love it so much!!

Jaroo0707 did a doodle of a bloodstained feather D:

SunsetAnimations did this *beautiful* drawing of Eri and Siren – as well as a solution to Siren's constant battle wounds XD

Trigger warning for NadirTom's *amazingly* realistic drawing of Siren and her injury!

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaand – *COSPLAY!* Yes, this has actually happened. Here are the preparations by the wonderful Erin B, who is also **err_we_are_meant_to_be** on Tumblr, aaaaaaaand here are the results <-- that one's set fire to the rain, and this one --> is 'why Canary doesn't need a girlfriend' XD

EDIT (07/07/2020) - I keep running out of room to add fanart!

This is by **krymlepiollo** on Tumblr, with a super sweet drawing of Canary and Eri looking out the train window!

This one's from **AdaMoose**, who did an *adorable* drawing of Canary Walking on Sunshine!! And here's another drawing from this wonderful person - what would happen if Canary sung the healing incantation from Tangled! (I get that suggestion all the time and it dRIVES ME UP THE WALL OH MY GOD) And aNOTHER ONe!

FiveInBinaryOr101's back!! They drew an adorable doodle of Canary singing with his guitar!

Misza_07 did this wonderful drawing of Canary singing by the sea ! :D

This is a pretty interpretation of Aozora by nightskywithrainbows!

It's Siren's radio introduction by l o f t y!! So cute!

A Taste of Tomorrow

Chapter Notes

I have decided that it is now officially *safe* to conclude that the next update (after this one), will be the final chapter of Canary!

Freaking freeeeeeeeeddddddddooooooooooommmmmmmmmm

Fifty chapters oh my *God* – what's the word count – Jesus *Christ* –

I will update it on Sunday, February 2nd – which I know is six days away, and not five – but I'm doing that for *two* reasons:

- The discord server kindly pointed out that I actually updated a day early back along so this is making up for it because if I don't stick to the schedule that was made to keep everyone in check, I have a strong feeling I will be ambushed by a rather large flock of *pigeons*. So… can't say no to that.
- If I update on *Sunday* rather than *Saturday*, I CAN BINGE WRITE THE ENTIRE THING ON A WEEKEND DAY –

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"I can't believe the Culture Festival is coming up so soon!" groaned Mina that lunch time, collapsing into a sofa and almost hitting Hagakure in the process.

"We have had a *while* to prepare, ribbit," acknowledged Asui, who by now had repeated her insistence of being called *Tsu* or *Tsuyu* to Midoriya – he was already so used to calling her Asui…

"But the movements are still too *sloppy!"* she barked, sitting bolt

upright again. She pointed an accusing finger at Midoriya, who was standing with Eri over Todoroki's computer screen, looking up how to make candy apples. Ever since she found out her favourite fruit could be made even *better*, she'd been transfixed by the idea of making them. "It only comes together right when Canary comes in!"

"Is that part of your Quirk?" wondered Uraraka, who had just slammed a rather heavy sounding bag of sugar down onto the kitchen counter, donated by Sato.

"I-I guess it could be…" Midoriya frowned. He hadn't actually considered what power the song they were using would produce. He probably should have done that earlier, but it hadn't immediately flagged itself up to him as something that would be remotely dangerous – or particularly useful either.

"It makes sense," nodded Jiro from across the room. She was speaking rather loudly, because she had her ear jacks pulled into her phone, mouthing the lyrics and tapping the side of the sofa as she considered a way to change the drums to fit Kacchan, who had complained that it was too easy – and kept improvising, knocking everyone but Midoriya, Jiro and Mina out of sync.

"I'd say…" pondered Uraraka, pulling a face as she considered the song, "maybe something emotional? You said quite a lot of songs do that."

Midoriya nodded, still vaguely focused on glancing at the candy apple recipes, "Hopefully something that makes everyone enjoy it more…"

"Yeah, that would be incredibly useful," Shinso sighed.

He'd managed to stay out of the whole, singing and dancing charade, which Midoriya found quite impressive. However, he had been taught *expertly* by Jiro to play along to the song they had chosen on the guitar. The original score didn't even *have* a guitar piece! Nonetheless, Jiro had managed to manipulate it to include everything they needed. Their keyboard players filled the gaps, that being Yaoyorozu, and, much to Midoriya's surprise, Kaminari. He had desperately wanted to play the guitar, but had been beaten to it by Shinso, who refused to do anything else, and Tokoyami, who already knew at least the basics. Instead, Kaminari had been given an instrument dragged out of the depths of Jiro's house – something her mum apparently used way back when – a kind of, handheld keyboard thing… she called it a *keytar* – and the whole situation just made Midoriya laugh – it was that

ridiculous. Kaminari was enjoying it though, especially when they messed around with the settings to make it sound like a trumpet instead.

“Speaking of being incredibly useful,” Jiro perked up, speaking normally now that she’d paused her music.

Shinso sighed, “What do you want us to do now?”

She gave him a look, “I wrote a load of stuff on a sheet of music last night and now I can’t find it anywhere. I must have left it back over at the stage.”

“We could go get it for you!” Midoriya offered. Shinso glared at him as if to say *don’t fall for her trap*.

“Oh, *could you?”*

Shinso groaned even louder. “Come on then – we can show Eri around the other classes’ stuff that they’re setting up in the meantime.”

“I can have a look for a recipe, Canary,” offered Sato, who had just been conversing with Uraraka about where to float the bag of sugar to, and whether *floating it* was a wise idea at all. They were all envisioning sugar granules floating through the air…

“Oh, thank you,” he smiled, and Eri grasped his hand as they left them to it and walked over to the door to pull their shoes on.

It had been only two days since Eri came back. It was a surprise to both her *and* Midoriya, how quickly everything about the Culture Festival had started setting up… Apparently, the rest of the school had been given the all clear that Monday, when Midoriya was busy with the yakuza raid. Trust UA to move this quickly… then again, they didn’t have much of a choice. The Culture Festival was *this Sunday!* And the heroes had only *just* decided that, yes, it was ok for it to go ahead. They were apparently prepared to cancel it if something bad happened during the raid… but since it all went ok after all, they gave in, and let their eager students set about on their various projects. However, most *had* already started to set them up, including the stage and a lot of other, grander scale endeavours.

“This is incredible…” gaped Midoriya as he, Shinso and Eri wandered through the UA grounds towards their stage.

He’d seen *quite a few* things being prepared beforehand, but he

honestly thought it was just support course mayhem. From what he knew about Hatsume… he'd decided not to question it – and he wasn't *entirely* wrong. A lot of it *was* the support course, preparing to show off their creations to potential investors. But a good proportion of it was for the business course too, as this was a perfect opportunity for them to set up their own little market simulations… and the best students even paired up with support course students to help promote their work!

Filling in the gaps were, of course, the hero course and general studies, who were really just here for fun. They had their go back in the Sports Festival – the chance for general studies students, like Midoriya and Shinso, to transfer to the hero course, and for the current hero course members, it was their opportunity to show off their stuff. Now, it was the chance for the rest of the school. Midoriya would have hated for it all to be shut down because of dangers the *hero course*, or, more specifically, *Midoriya himself*, brought to the table.

"What are they doing?" Eri questioned glancing at all the colours and decorations; busy students milling around and all the preparations underway.

"Getting ready for their performances!" Midoriya told her. "See, whilst we're doing our little show, everyone else has their own chance to do something fun too."

"Like what?"

"Like making *candy apples!"*

"Candy apples?!" her excitement over the trivial food was just as adorable as Siren, now perched on the tip of Eri's horn, as she proudly claimed her, like, seventh child – no, *eighth*… probably more…

"Well, look who it is!"

The three of them stopped in their tracks and turned their heads.

"Hey there, guys!" Ohchi called over to them, waving with her free hand whilst the other held a clipboard to her chest.

It was class 1-C – everyone was there in their PE kits, all separated into distinct groups, which was likely Ohchi's doing. They all stopped in their tracks when they realised who their class president was talking to – standing up from painting or woodwork or general

planning, to smile and wave excitably at them.

“U-Um – hi!” Midoriya waved back nervously, still holding Eri’s hand tightly in the other hand. Siren flew off Eri’s horn and landed on Midoriya’s shoulder, like she was preparing herself to protect him from Ohchi.

“You… mind if I walk with you guys for a second?” she asked… oddly, glancing at Siren unsurely as she did so. She put her clipboard on the floor by her feet, as if they had already made their decision to let her.

Midoriya exchanged glances with Shinso. He had always been the one who was more unsure around class 1-C, at least, that was what Midoriya thought.

“Of course…?” Midoriya replied unsurely after he realised too many seconds had passed without a response.

Shinso started walking first, and Midoriya, Eri and Ohchi followed in his footsteps. Siren just *watched*.

Ohchi sighed, “Wow – you guys must be relieved that you’re… finally on the hero course together! And it’s all sorted out and everything…”

Midoriya narrowed his eyes, what was she on about?

“We – um, our class, that is – ask Present Mic how you guys are going sometimes during homeroom,” she admitted, tugging at the ends of her long, straight hair. “Nearly every time, he’d say that, yeah – Shinso was doing fine… But *you*, Midoriya – he always seemed so uncertain… but then, this morning – he was like *better than ever!”* she smiled. She seemed so much more… laid back and happy than she had when Midoriya knew her better. It looked like UA had done her good too.

“O-Oh, um, yeah – I guess so,” Midoriya nodded, rubbing his own hair nervously.

“What do you want?” Shinso suddenly snapped, not looking back at her. It made Midoriya jump.

Ohchi pulled a face, “I just haven’t had the chance to talk with you two ever since you left our class! So many things have *happened* to you both… But, it’s been almost a month since you got back now, Midoriya. It feels like such a long time for you to finally start feeling

ok again – and I just… on behalf of your old class – thought I should say that we're really happy that you've… found your way."

Midoriya blinked at her, "…Thank you."

She must have been thinking about this a lot. Whatever she was actually trying to say, it was rather heartfelt… and then Midoriya realised something.

"H-Have I *ever* had a proper conversation with you?" he queried with a frown.

"Err," Ohchi replied with equal perplexity, "You know, I'm not sure if you have."

"I-I'm so sorry," Midoriya replied. They were almost at the stage now. Shinso was starting to look a little less tense, and Eri was just curious as to what was going on. "I-I just –"

"No, it's ok!" she insisted, "Look, tell me if I'm wrong – but I always thought… you were kind of bullied at your old school because everyone thought you were Quirkless?"

Midoriya bit his lip – she, of course, was spot on.

She must have realised this from his facial expressions, because then she added, "and then you come to UA and you're prepared for it to be the same because you haven't known any difference! Which makes, perfect sense – but then you found your Quirk and you somehow ended up in Present Mic's radio studio and, well, everyone knows the rest."

They stopped in front of the stage, all blinking at Ohchi and wondering what she was trying to get to here.

"Of *course*, you'd feel kind of uncomfortable in our class – and honestly – I'm *pretty* sure I didn't help. I know I –" she laughed a little, kicking at the grass – "badmouth the hero course quite a lot. And then there's *Koneko*, who's way too curious for her own good. She never meant anything by it! She just really struggles recognising when a question is a good idea to ask or… not."

"We noticed," Shinso replied, his arms crossed.

"*Shinso,"* Midoriya whispered to him harshly.

“What?” he retorted.

Siren let out one of her iconic, chirping laughs.

Ohchi waved it off with a chuckle, joining in with Siren, “I get it – I really do. I bet all those questions were the *last* thing you wanted to hear way back when. And I’m sure I was a little intrusive from time to time too...” she sighed in apparent frustration. “Look, just – what I’m *trying* to say is… good luck to you guys. It’s… been a pleasure being… part of your origin story! Both of you – I can see that you’ll be big heroes one day. Know that *most* of us from *good old class 1-C* will be telling *everyone* in the future that we used to know you guys and stuff.”

Midoriya smiled, “Or… you’ll be Prime Minister and we’ll be telling everyone that *we* used to know *you.”*

Ohchi blinked for a second, before blushing furiously and laughing, “Now wouldn’t that be a nice thing to aim for?!”

Shinso nudged Midoriya, before pointing up to the stage, indicating that he’d go and grab Jiro’s music sheet, and he hurried off to retrieve it.

“Seriously though – if you guys wanna hang out with us at some point, just… knock on our door!”

“We will,” Midoriya smiled. “I-If I’m brave enough.”

“You?! You’re the bravest guy I know!” Midoriya wasn’t sure if she was being sarcastic or not, until she added, “I’m not kidding – I wouldn’t have the guts to sing in front of a crowd as big as that in the *Sports Festival* – let alone the radio – or, Jeez, whatever *this* is,” she sighed, hands on her hips as she gazed at the stage, “Is this what class A is doing for the Culture Festival?”

Midoriya nodded, “They started planning before I got my voice back… and planned it to be kind of a surprise for me – didn’t get Shinso to dance though.”

“What?!” she laughed as Shinso returned, “Your best friend’s life is pretty much a musical and you’ve managed to avoid singing and dancing this entire time?”

“Just watch me,” Shinso replied. There was a slight grin there, and Midoriya counted that as a success.

“I sure will – watch your performance thing, that is,” she said, nodding towards the stage. “We’ll just abandon our haunted house thing for a bit to see it.”

“That’s what you’re doing for the Culture Festival?” Shinso questioned, raising his eyebrows as the four of them started to walk back away from the stage.

She nodded, “Sounds fun, *huh?”*

Eri tugged on Midoriya’s hand, “What’s a haunted house?”

“Oh, hi!” Ohchi grinned, “I’m Ohchi – sorry I didn’t say hello earlier – it’s nice to meet you!”

Eri just pulled back on Midoriya’s hand, hiding behind his legs.

Midoriya grinned apologetically, “She’s a little shy – sorry.”

“Aw, it’s ok. But a haunted house attraction is where people walk through a big scary house – or little maze, in our case – and try to reach the end without being scared!”

“Sounds scary…” she whispered.

“It sure does,” Midoriya nodded, “and I’ve had enough *tests of courage* for a lifetime.”

Shinso scoffed, “The last one ended well, didn’t it?”

Ohchi was a little confused by that inside joke, but she didn’t press for an explanation. “Anyway – I’ll leave you guys to it,” she said as they reached the end of the little road that most of the Culture Festival stalls were set up.

Midoriya and Shinso had walked the long way around to reach the stage the first time, to show Eri around. They took the shorter route on the way back and had now reached a crossroads where they could separate from Ohchi.

“We have film nights on Saturday evenings!” Ohchi told them after a moment’s thought, “You could come along – and bring some of your friends from class A too! We promise no horror movies.”

Shinso nodded, “Yeah… maybe we will.”

Ohchi beamed, turning on her heel and running off as she waved,

“Goodbye! See you guys soon then!”

“Bye!” Midoriya called back.

“Huh…” Shinso sighed as she disappeared, “That was unexpected.”

“But… nice,” Midoriya admitted.

“Yeah… yeah, it was – nice of her. I was never really fond of her – always seemed like such a grump.”

Midoriya grinned, as they started to walk back to Heights Alliance, “Even grumps like you can have their nice sides.”

“Yeah,” Shinso nodded, “I guess you’re –” but then he stopped as he fully processed what Midoriya had said. He caught the evil grin on his face, “…Hey!”

Midoriya laughed loudly.

“I’m not a grump! Eri, come on, agree with me!”

Eri had no remorse as she said, “No, he’s right.”

Shinso grabbed his heart as he pretended to die and fall to the floor, dropping Jiro’s music sheet in the process, “I’ve been shot –”

“Come on, Eri – he’s just being over dramatic,” Midoriya grinned, picking up the music and patting Eri on her head as he led her away from Shinso’s body. She seemed a little unsure at first, but soon realised it was a joke.

“…You just going to leave me here?!” Shinso called after them as they walked away. Siren had flown off Midoriya’s shoulder and landed beside Shinso, gazing into his eyes, with the great danger of deciding to peck them. Midoriya could hear him whispering *don’t you dare*.

“It’s alright, Eri, he’s just being silly,” Midoriya reassured her, patting her head.

“Stop being silly!” she called back to Shinso.

“Yeah, Shinso!” Midoriya said, struggling not to burst into laughter.

They reached the dorms and Midoriya handed the music sheet over to Jiro soon after.

“Where’s Shinso?” she asked.

“He’s dead,” Eri replied… honestly.

Jiro and everyone else within earshot stopped and stared at her.

“She means we left him draped on the path melodramatically,” Midoriya explained.

“Ah,” Jiro nodded, “very dead.”

“Very.”

“…I guess we should organise a burial service,” she grinned.

“Oh yeah, definitely,” Midoriya cackled.

“Haven’t we done this before?” Todoroki recalled.

“It never gets old,” Jiro admitted, grabbing an armful of blankets. “Want to come with me and bury Shinso, Eri?”

She hesitated, but then nodded, and grabbed Jiro’s outstretched earphone jack unsurely.

“I was just going to wait and see how long he’d lie there,” Midoriya admitted. “Careful though, Siren’s busy tormenting him, as it seems.”

“…Just film from the window and post it on your extremely popular social media,” Jiro decided with a grin and a nod, struggling to pull her hood up over her head so she wouldn’t be recognised on the video. She hadn’t actually done a face reveal yet… and people were starting to get curious. “I’ll make sure Eri’s out of camera shot – here, hold this pillow, Eri – you have to throw it at him if he becomes a zombie and wakes up.”

“Ok,” she nodded, like she was taking this job very seriously.

And so, Midoriya and Todoroki leant on the windowsill, filming as Jiro waltzed up to Shinso’s *dead body*, and tossed all her blankets on him, Siren observing from above, circling like a vulture.

Midoriya was laughing uncontrollably, struggling to hold the camera still as Todoroki whispered beside him, “We are gathered here today…”

As the first edition of Midoriya's social media for *weeks* – titled *Raven 'died' so Owl decided to bury him* – it was safe to say, it was a very popular update.

"Have you ever realised…" Midoriya murmured as he leant over to Shinso, whispering in his ear, "That we look just like a mini Present Mic and mini Mr Aizawa."

He hesitated for a moment, narrowing his eyes at Midoriya, until he turned back the sight of the two heroes in question, conversing animatedly (well, at least, Present Mic was) in the entrance hall of the radio building. Both were in their full hero costumes, as were Midoriya and Shinso.

Shinso in his dark purple and black suit, with Mr Aizawa's scarf around his neck, and hair sticking up like Mr Aizawa's did when he activated his Quirk. Midoriya in a leather jacket and headphones hanging around his neck –

Shinso let out a bubbling laugh, and Midoriya quickly joined in. Because he was *so* right.

Mr Aizawa gave them a look whilst Shinso desperately tried to stifle it.

Midoriya had already composed himself – the traitor – meanwhile, Shinso felt like he was about to explode, as his mentor walked over to the two of them, sighing deeply.

"You will be staying here for the rest of the day for your work study," Mr Aizawa explained.

Shinso bit his lip and nodded. Midoriya did the same, innocently and sweetly like the little bastard he is.

"Like the others, if you choose to stay on your work study, you will have to attend extra classes to keep on track of your schoolwork. I expect nothing but the best from the both of you – *especially* since neither of you have had quite the same experiences the rest of the class have. You're still behind, don't let this knock you back further."

Ok, Shinso had sorted himself out now, and he nodded surely once more.

“Mic has lessons until the end of the day. Until then, both of you will be working with White-Noise,” he continued.

“And *then* you and I will finally get to do some *proper* hero work *together* again!” Present Mic yelled, which made Shinso wince, but Midoriya just *lit up*. Even Siren perked up a little more on Midoriya’s shoulder. “How does that sound?!”

“Great!” Midoriya replied happily, nodding away. Shinso was already getting dizzy.

He could already see the future – Midoriya off doing big-shot hero stuff, whilst Shinso worked more underground. They would talk often – work together from time to time. And he would *definitely* find himself in situations like this frequently.

And whilst their two teachers walked out of the hero agency, Present Mic chattering away and waving his arms about, Mr Aizawa slouching along behind with his hands in his pockets, Shinso smiled. After all the trials and tribulations, they were *finally* getting where they needed to go.

“It’s good to see the two of you again,” Static, the underground hero who worked for the more secretive division of Present Mic’s hero agency, nodded to them. Shinso hadn’t even realised he’d been standing there, in the background, as they spoke to Mr Aizawa and Present Mic. “During your internships, however –” he cleared his throat awkwardly – “short they were, we gave you an insight into how we work around here, but we couldn’t have you working in many serious situations due to certain sensitivities and how… new the two of you were to the prospect of hero work. This time, we can afford for you to join us more officially, as long as you can prove you are able to keep up and make a positive contribution.”

The two of them nodded. Ever since they were last here, things had changed – and quite a lot. Shinso was far more adept at using Mr Aizawa’s scarf – so he could be more of a help in capturing criminals and moving quickly across buildings. Midoriya had improved *a lot* too. Not only had his confidence skyrocketed, but Hatsume’s new invention, that voice muffler, was a stroke of *genius.* Now, Midoriya could sneak up on people whilst still using his, usually rather loud and disruptive, Quirk! *And* because both Static and Shinso knew sign

language, Midoriya was able to *actually communicate* with them whilst singing.

Static held up two laminated cards, they were coloured bright yellow. “These are key cards to the building,” he explained, “like your old ones. However, these will give you access to every floor without supervision. Please *don’t lose them.”*

Shinso grinned and gave Midoriya a look as they both accepted their cards. Losing his key card, the first time around, was the only reason they made friends with Jiro.

Midoriya elbowed him in response.

He waved at the two friendly receptionists as they passed and entered the elevator; they’d signed in earlier.

“Do you remember how our White-Noise team works?” Static questioned, leaning against the mirror on the elevator as the doors closed.

Shinso opened his mouth to reply, but Midoriya beat him to it.

“You respond to situations both major and minor alerted through the hero help line, advertised over Put Your Hands Up Radio,” he explained, speaking quite quickly and waving his hands about, which he had a habit of doing when he’s trying to explain anything, ever. “You have a call room to redirect inquiries to the police if need be, or mental health experts for those who need it. Although, most of the hero responses go straight to you – the underground response team. You can also be recruited by other agencies or by the police if they feel like your skills are best suited for the situation. But the underground team doesn’t patrol during the day or make many public appearances – that’s all, um, for heroes like Present Mic and Minim…” he trailed off, fiddling nervously with his fingers whilst Static blinked at him.

The elevator *dinged* and the doors opened.

“Err, yeah – yeah, that’s pretty much it,” Static nodded in apparent surprise. He hadn’t had much interaction with Midoriya yet, since he mainly tutored Shinso during their internship – which seemed *so* long ago now, not long before the whole, Stain incident.

They were led down a corridor and into Static’s office – Shinso was pretty sure he’d been there before, but he wasn’t sure if Midoriya had.

Static sat down in his chair and indicated Midoriya and Shinso to do the same, opposite him.

“We don’t usually find much action during daylight hours,” he admitted. “We find that evenings see the most incidences across all departments.”

“So, we’re here for the most boring part of the day?” Shinso questioned, raising an eyebrow.

Static smiled and rolled his eyes, “There’s always something to do. But I do have a plan for the evening, if you’re interested.”

“What’s that?” asked Midoriya.

“Well, it’s a Thursday, so you’ll be on the radio. Meanwhile, Brain Blank, I thought you could come with me in response to any incidences. Since Canary hasn’t been on the show for a while, it’s likely that there’ll be more callers than usual. Ask Shaberu, she’ll have the statistics.”

“Who’s Shaberu?” both Midoriya and Shinso queried at the same time.

Static blinked at them, “You know? Blue skin, lots of teeth?”

“…Aozora?” Shinso frowned.

“Aozora Shaberu?” repeated Static. “Has she not informed you of her surname before?”

“I thought Aozora *was* her surname…” Midoriya whispered, like he was about to have an existential crisis.

“Anyway,” Static said, shaking his head, “We’ll use today as an introductory session before Present Mic returns and Canary leaves to the over-ground team. It’s been a while, so it would be good for the two of you to refresh your memory, despite your… evident knowledge of how we work.”

He stood up, straightening the jacket of his hero costume, “Well then? Let’s get to work –”

“I feel sorry for the amount of paperwork you have to do,” Midoriya muttered as he and Present Mic walked out the backdoor to the hero agency, later that afternoon.

Present Mic burst into laughter, “Static put you to work then, did he?!”

“You could say that,” Midoriya shrugged with a grin.

Siren chirped loudly from his hair.

“I see Siren agrees,” Present Mic acknowledged, now waltzing out onto the street beside Midoriya.

“She does,” Midoriya nodded. “She likes to make her opinion known.”

“Can’t disagree with you there,” his teacher sighed.

Midoriya didn’t know exactly what they were doing – patrolling, maybe? Probably. A lot about hero work at Present Mic’s place, and probably a lot elsewhere, was keeping up appearances. The more people knew about the agency, the more people called them, the more were helped, and the more work they’d get. Consequently, the more well known and popular heroes needed to be out and about at whatever chances they got. Besides, they could keep an eye out for troublemakers in the process, and… help cats down from trees or something. At least, that was how Midoriya saw it.

“Aozora was mumbling about getting one of your other aria friends on tonight,” Present Mic informed Midoriya as they approached the main street.

“W-Was she?” Midoriya replied. He’d seen her already *briefly* today, but she hadn’t mentioned anything of the sort. “Well… Raven can’t come on because he’s going to go with Static on some kind of evening patrol… and it’s Thursday – so Owl *should* be joining us.”

“Yeah, that all worked out better than we’d hoped!” his hero laughed, “Jiro can come on with you on Thursdays, *and* take your place if you’re out for some reason!”

“Y-Yeah, it is pretty good,” nodded Midoriya, struggling to pay attention to where he was walking whilst Siren tried to dangle off his head from an oddly long strand of hair. “I guess I could ask one of the other three – or just all of them and see who wants to come the most…”

“How about Todoroki?” Present Mic suggested. Midoriya thought he was joking until he caught the look on his face and realised he was being serious. “Aozora would be pleased – he has a good social media presence!”

“Iida’s probably the worst at it,” Midoriya admitted with a meek grin. “Uraraka’s been starting something up under the name Dove too – and she’s doing pretty well – but… well, she only has one post at the moment,” he laughed.

“And what’s that?!”

Siren was now chirping loudly at him from his shoulder, so Midoriya pulled a small handful of seed from his pocket as he spoke, “Oh – she just said – tips on saving money: sleep, all day, because being awake is expensive.”

Present Mic spluttered into laughter.

“Um, hi?”

Midoriya blinked and turned, his eyes settling on the owner of the voice, a boy in a middle school uniform, who had a couple of girls hiding behind him and giggling quietly, pushing the first boy a little closer to Midoriya.

“Hello!” Midoriya replied with a smile.

“You’re Canary, right?” he asked, clearly trying to sound unbothered, but failing miserably.

“Err, yeah! That’s me!”

“We saw you at the Sports Festival!” blurted out one of the girls, “You were *awesome!”*

Midoriya rubbed the back of his head sheepishly as he laughed, his other hand still outstretched to feed Siren, “Thanks – that seems like s-so long ago now.”

“Seems like our patrol’s been ambushed,” Present Mic whispered to him with a laugh, elbowing his side as Midoriya realised he was signing something for someone else on the other side of the little crowd that was forming.

Oh, damn – people.

The three people who had been talking to Midoriya burst into laughter, “Oh – whoops – d-did I say that out loud…?”

“I would *totally* be the same if I was a hero like you,” laughed the other girl. “But with like, a less awesome Quirk.”

Midoriya wiped his hand on his side to free of it the few remaining pieces of birdseed that Siren had missed once she decided to reaffirm her place on his shoulder. “W-Well – I had no idea I had a Quirk at all until… um – maybe a week or two before the Sports Festival.”

“No *way* – really?!” gaped the boy. “You thought you were Quirkless…?”

“Completely and utterly,” Midoriya nodded, “I was thinking of applying to the hero course anyway though… technically – I got my provisional hero licence without knowing I’d ever be able to use my Quirk again.”

“Man – that’s so cool!” squealed the first girl, “C-Can we have you autograph o-or something?”

“Err… sure?” Midoriya replied nervously. “Sorry – I’m still not that used to –”

Siren bit him on the ear.

“– *ouch* – yes, sorry – I’ll give you more attention – just a second!”

One of the girls had retrieved a pen from her bag, and a little notebook, which she asked for him to sign in triplicate.

But as soon as he had handed the pen back, Siren let out a warning tweet –

– and that bag was ripped off the girl’s shoulder.

Midoriya momentarily wondered if he should just set Siren on the assailant, who had already taken to the sky – but he reckoned it would be better if he followed her…

He should really stop defaulting to wings – but nonetheless, Midoriya slipped his muffler over his face, activated it, and leapt into the air in seconds – he’d practised this song so much, that the power activated moments after jumping straight to the chorus.

Within seconds, he had flown to intercept the woman's path. She skidded to a halt, aiming to run down a sideroad – but now Siren had catapulted herself into the mugger's *face*, which made Midoriya laugh. "Sorry," he apologised out of habit, taking off the muffler and still hovering in the air with little beats of his wings that soon started to disintegrate and fall apart painlessly.

He took the bag from her grip in her moment of bewilderment, and then pulled on her collar to take her back over to Present Mic, who had just been watching with a hint of pride in his eyes – he would know what to do next.

Present Mic gripped the offender's arm as Midoriya removed Siren from the air, who had been persisting to flutter around her face, tweeting aggressively.

"Oh – um – here," Midoriya said as he returned the bag.

"Oh my gosh – thank you so much!" she exclaimed, finally able to return the pen and paper to her bag.

"I-It's ok," Midoriya smiled, brushing feathers off him as they were blown around in the wind, fading into nothingness as onlookers gazed in apparent wonder.

The thief looked *very* disgruntled as Present Mic held her hands behind her back. She didn't put up much of a struggle – which was *not* what Midoriya was used to.

She had probably thought that the crowd would hinder any hero's ability to pursue her, and believed her victim wouldn't notice the quick removal of her bag. Nonetheless, it was a poorly calculated move - when faced with someone who could simply fly above the crowd's heads to chase after her...

Present Mic nudged Midoriya's side *again*, "Good *job,"* he grinned.

Midoriya blinked at him, trying to ignore the fact that he was blushing a little, "Huh – what –"

"TO THE POLICE STATION!" Present Mic announced loudly, and Midoriya just sighed, still smiling secretively as he waved goodbye to the crowd they'd gathered, as their thief came to terms with how stupid of an idea that had been.

Yeah… if this was what his tomorrow looked like… he could get used

to this.

"– So, I was *thinking* –"

"Yes, one hundred *million* times, yes."

That was Jiro, trying to ask something of Aozora. Midoriya hadn't really been listening – he had been trying to explain to Todoroki how the radio show would work.

"What's going on?" Midoriya questioned curiously.

"Filming your Culture Festival *performance?!"* Aozora cried. "*PERFORMANCE?!* Why wasn't I informed already? You two are *singing?!"*

"Well, they did only finalise it recently," Todoroki pointed out helpfully.

"Shush, Puffin," Aozora retorted, holding a finger up to silence him, "I'm freaking out over these two now – I'll get to you in a minute." Then, she gasped loudly, pressing her hands over her cheeks as her eyes widened, "Oh my God – we could use this as a face reveal – *yes*, this is *perfect!* When is it – this Sunday, right? Right, I can do this – I can do this – *keep in contact* and I'll sort it out!" she insisted, now grabbing Jiro's shoulders; they were almost nose to nose.

"…Ok," Jiro squeaked.

Aozora let go of Jiro, almost pushing her over accidently, as she swung around to point at Midoriya dramatically, "I NEED DOVE'S CONTACT DETAILS!"

"Ok," Midoriya replied, now sitting in his armchair and scrolling through his phone nonchalantly.

"AND CRANE'S – because he's obviously useless and needs my help."

"Ok."

She turned to Todoroki, pointing at him for a moment, before saying, "You're doing great, honey – keep it up – *WHAT THE HELL IS RAVEN*

DOING?!"

"Nothing – he doesn't want to be an over-ground hero, remember?" Jiro reminded her.

She sighed exasperatedly, "*Fine* – but after this video thing – I want *all of you* – all… one, two, three… FIVE! No*, SIX!"*

"Ok," Midoriya nodded. He wasn't too sure what he was nodding to.

Aozora cackled, "My little *fledglings –"*

Todoroki leant over to Midoriya, "Is she always like this…?"

"Ok – no – yes, I mean yes – *yes*, she's always like this."

– which was when Present Mic tossed open the door. Nakano had a go at him for it – the doorknob kept hitting the wall and chipping the paint off.

He ignored him.

"RADIO SHOW – LET'S GO, LET'S *GO!"* he yelled loudly, tossing a pair of headphones at Midoriya, who caught them without looking up from his phone.

When Midorya shoved his phone in his jacket pocket, he caught the stunned look on Todoroki's face. "Yes," he sighed with a grin, "it's always like this – and I think it always will be."

It took a moment for a small smile to spread across his face, "Even when you're at the helm, I bet."

Midoriya stumbled over the words that fell out of his mouth, "*W-What* – t-that's probably *not* going t-to happen!"

"Sure," he shrugged, like he didn't believe him, walking into the radio studio after Jiro.

Midoriya hesitated for a moment.

"Well?" Present Mic called out, "You coming or not? My Canary co-host?!"

Midoriya grinned.

“Coming!”

Chapter End Notes

Second to last end notes, second to last art section!

Thelovypop17 has gifted us her take on an *evil Canary!*

Then our awesome animatic person, Syra Eerie, did a short animation of Canary being reunited with Siren! It’s so awesomeeee :D

Jaroo0707 drew a green feather stained with red last time… this time around! We’re all happy again with an updated feather!

Aaaand – for a beautiful edition, we have another Siren meme from **FiveInBinaryOr101**!

This is the space where - after finishing Canary - I come back to in order to link more art because I defeated the character count in chapter 50!

Feilsy is here with a super cool drawing of Midoriya flying in the Sports Festival!

FictiveFeline did this *amazing* sketch of a broken Canary (which is sad and *potentially* triggering so...)

Mr.Momstachio from discord did a sketch of Midoriya's and Eri's return!

BroadwayFangirl did a sweet doodle of Siren with the headband from the Sports Festival!

Totally Not Toga (from Discord) drew this amazing sky-view of Canary and Siren! :D

chrono197 from Tumblr did this *adorable* drawing of Canary with his aria!

Also from Tumblr, we have **regretfulartist** with a really cool silhouette of Canary with his wings! - and here's another one from them, for Izuku vs Todoroki in the Sports Festival!! :D

Xenolis mADE AN ANIMATIC OF CHAPTER 19 AND I LINKED IT THERE TOO BECAUSE OH MY GOD IT'S ANACTUALFIGHTSCENEANIMATICANDTHEYPUTSOMUCHTIMEANDEFF aND they did another one! This is Toxic!

This was sent to me by the awesome peep who converts Canary into Russian somewhere or another - and it's Set Fire to the Rain - and it's awesome - it's by KrutchenKocat (instagram) / Темная К - so ya it's awesome (update) - We have another piece of art from this wonderful person! And there's *a Setsuna marshmallow in the background I'm actuallycryingohmygod*

Here's another TikTok edition with **kateluvyou** 's cosplay of Jiro singing Rescue!!

Thelovypop17 did another pretty Canary doodle!

Enderwoah did an *adorable* rendition of Siren as a human! Then her trying to figure out if electric human is worthy of her friendship XD

Aaaand we've run out of room again! Onto chapter 48...

The Bird Who Wasn't Afraid to Fly

Chapter Notes

Welcome – to the final chapter of Canary! Thank you all *so much* for making it all the way here! It's been amazing, but I'm *so* glad it's over.

Ignore me, shamelessly referencing my old fic in here – I saw the opportunity and I *ran* with it –

There are two songs in this chapter. The first does *not* have a cover with the correct male/female parts – and the instruments used don't necessarily match up to those described, so I'm just going to have to get you to stretch your imagination with it, sorry.

The other song, the very last song used, I have never mentioned before, not even when I first suggested the idea of Canary back in my last fic. *But* – it is the song that inspired me to write this. It also doesn't quite have the right covers – but I felt like I had to put it in. I have linked the original (female voice), an edit which makes her sound slightly male but at the same time it's kind of weird, and the only decent male cover (but it's too slow for my liking) – the original is the best but it's obviously the wrong gender voice! So, sorry! I know it's disappointing as the last song, but… *yeah.*

(me, a few hours later, after finishing the story and realising I need to leave space in the end notes so I'm writing this here)

AND THAT'S IT.

* rolls on the floor and starts to cry *

It's ooovvvveeeerrrrrrr

I'm freaking
*freeee

Goodbyeeeee!

slams door

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Ah! We should start posting *videos* online!” was what Mina yelled at the top of her voice at her friendship group that evening.

Shinso perked up, pulling out an earplug and leaning over the back of his chair to glance in their direction. He had been listening to Midoriya’s arsenal again. It had been a while since Shinso had seen an updated version, which was nice, since Shinso had overplayed every other addition. It was rather thought provoking, listening to Midoriya’s choice of music – no one else could make you think about it like that. And honestly, it was *really* improving his English skills. Despite the numerous Japanese songs that he’d also included, Midoriya still preferred the English ones, probably because it gave him greater tact in battles, since not everyone could understand and therefore predict what power he would gain…

But anyway – Mina was talking enthusiastically with people like Kaminari, Kirishima, Sero and a rather disinterested Bakugo. It was *not* a good mix of people. In Shinso’s opinion, it was a recipe for disaster.

“Videos?” Sero repeated with a smirk, “What – of Kaminari electrocuting himself?”

“Hm?” Kaminari replied. He had a fork stuck in his mouth, which was stuck to a very dangerous combination of wires. He’d broken his phone charger; this was his alternative.

Rather than, you know – *asking someone else for one.*

…Like a *normal person.*

Shinso rolled his eyes. Sometimes, he wondered what he’d got himself into, when it came to the hero course. And Midoriya – but there was *nobody* like Midoriya.

If someone told a younger Shinso that, not only would he end up in the most famous hero course in the country one day soon, but *this* was how he got there…? He'd most likely brainwash them into doing something that made them look *rather* foolish. Well, he'd picture it in great detail, but probably wouldn't have the guts to actually go through with it… That was who he was back then – a different kind of timid and shy to Midoriya, but strangely similar, nonetheless.

Shinso would hide his fear behind a coy smile and sullen eyes, his entire aura radiating a message of *don't you dare come near me*. Everyone had called him the villain, so, he acted like one, in a way… anything to make them stop and leave him along.

Then, there was Midoriya. At the thought of it all, Shinso reached up and ran his fingers over his feather pendant. Midoriya had been rambling on about lending it to Hatsume so she could cast it in a thin layer of resin to stop it from falling apart. Shinso wasn't sure how much he trusted her.

Shinso had never expected UA to be any different from before. A school full of hero-wannabes *had* to be worse, right? But when he noticed that shy, mute kid, who he *knew* would struggle to do the littlest of things alone, well, Shinso couldn't help but step in. He knew sign language, and so did Midoriya – and it all went on from there – a path that was unpretentious at first but took them both to the greatest heights and the worst lows. Now they were here – at the seemingly impossible place where they had always wanted to be.

And it took far less murder and blackmail than expected.

"– and we could so totally rival the radio gang!" Mina was pointing at Shinso now.

Shinso just blinked at her, he hadn't really been listening, "What?"

Hagakure was swaying side to side next to Mina, humming the tune to *Video Killed the Radio Star* on repeat.

Shinso sighed as he turned back around to his phone, lying and waiting for him on the table, "Whatever, you do you – but you'll never be more popular than Midoriya."

"This is true," croaked Tsuyu as she hopped past towards the bathrooms with armfuls of clothing. That was her only contribution to

the conversation, and Shinso respected her for it.

“As soon as you get vaguely well-known, people will start haggling with you to get screen time of Midoriya instead. You’d probably get more views on a bird watch episode of Siren than Kaminari shoving his nose up a power socket.”

Sero sighed with a knowing grin, “He’s right though – Canary’s probably going to be bigger than all of us one day, and he’s hardly ever seen on film. That’s just what it’ll turn into.”

“I beg to DIFFER!” Mina yelled in determination. “Come on, Kaminari! Let’s think of a channel name before we have to go get ready for the Culture Festival!”

“This can only end badly,” Kirishima smiled nervously, watching the two of them hurry off excitably.

Bakugo, who hadn’t been interested this entire time, just stood up, eyes focused on something on his phone and walked away – pulling on his shoes and marching outside. No one decided to question it. He’d been doing that a lot recently. In fact, Shinso hadn’t really known him when he *didn’t* do exactly this every couple of hours… In fact, Midoriya was pretty similar.

“Speaking of Midoriya,” Shinso frowned, “Has anyone seen him today?”

“He’s with Jiro, I believe,” Iida sighed from across the room. He’d been busy studying and was clearly considering moving back up to his room, since everyone was being so noisy. “She wanted a musical opinion on her rewrite of the song.”

“What’s that going to change though?” Shinso questioned, letting out a slight laugh, “The performance is *today*.”

“Jiro’s nervous since she’s doing most of the singing,” Todoroki informed Shinso. He was sitting opposite him, reading a book casually.

“Still,” Shinso huffed.

“Ok, everybody!” Yaoyorozu emerged from the bathrooms in a brilliant red and gold outfit, one she had designed herself, with some help from the other girls, and the internet, of course. “It’s time for you all to get changed!”

Shinso felt a cold despair leak from his heart.

Outfits.

If there was one thing Shinso hated about heroes, it was them *looking pretty for the cameras*.

Uraraka caught Shinso's eye. She was also dressed up – in something slightly different to Yaoyorozu, but following a similar theme, as she slowly raised an unassuming bag, a sly grin on her face.

"Oh, brain-wash boy," she said, grinning even wider. Now Shinso remembered why even innocent little beings like Midoriya and Uraraka frightened him, "Repeat after me – *I have no choice in this matter."*

…Where's Siren when you need her?

"Don't worry about it!" Midoriya insisted, "It all looks ok to me – I-I'm sure everything will be ok."

Jiro stood up. They had both been sitting on the empty stage as the last preparations for the Culture Festival occurred around them. "*How* did you manage to keep your cool during the Sports Festival?!"

Midoriya blinked at her, "I-I have no idea."

Jiro let out a nervous little squeal, pulling at her earphone jacks, "I shouldn't have asked Aozora to *cccooommmeee!"*

"W-What?! No! It was a brilliant idea!" Midoriya insisted, gathering up her music sheets so they wouldn't be blown away in the soft wind.

The stage was now enclosed in a very large, temporary hall that Cementos had helped them construct. This was mainly because they wanted to be able to have better control over the lighting, even when

the sun was shining high in the sky. Everything was planned out incredibly well, and, honestly, Midoriya was getting rather excited.

There was a large, central stage, with two, raised extensions that were initially there for just the lighting fixings, but Mina had soon come up with other ideas. Now, it was possible to run up and down those raised platforms, to the left and right of the standing area for the audience and make their entire performance more… *dynamic* – which was how Mina described it.

"A-And even class B's going to watch because Iida asked when they were doing their play… thing - so we didn't clash! Now there's going to be even *more* people!" Jiro continued to whine as the two of them wandered off the stage, blinking as they emerged into the morning light.

"I just… try not to think about it," Midoriya sighed, watching as Siren flew around them absentmindedly. "It's super scary when you have to go out there and people are all watching you and… stuff… but then – once you've started – everything becomes a lot easier!"

"Yeah but I don't have some kind of awesome singing Quirk," Jiro moaned, burying her face in her hands and almost walking right into Ohchi, who waved as she hurried past, dressed up in some rather frightening makeup and gear for class 1-C's haunted maze.

"I-I don't know if my Quirk actually influences my singing," Midoriya admitted, biting his lip. "Maybe we should ask Monoma."

Jiro blinked at him and then *burst* into laughter, "Oh my God, let's do a karaoke contest with class 1-B! See if your Quirk makes Monoma sing better!"

Midoriya laughed sheepishly with her, rubbing the back of his head as Siren landed in his hair, "W-Well, if you're still nervous about this afternoon – Present Mic gave me some really good advice back before the first radio show that helps me from time to time…"

"Oh yeah?" she asked, raising an eyebrow as she took her music sheets back off Midoriya. "What's that?"

"Well… excitement and nervous…ness – it feels really similar, if you think about it… So… when you feel scared – tell yourself that you're *not* nervous – you're excited!"

Jiro smiled. Midoriya only now recalled that this *had* to have been

mentioned on the radio before. Although, Jiro either didn't remember, or appreciated the advice anyway. "Yeah… thanks – I'll try!"

That was when Siren let off her warning tweet.

Midoriya tensed and jumped at the sound almost instinctively. He turned his head quickly –

– and made eye contact with Kacchan, walking past.

He sighed and relaxed a little.

Jiro's eyes darted between the two as they all parted ways, "…you should talk to him."

"W-What?!" Midoriya explained.

Jiro stopped, planting her feet on the ground and putting a hand on her hips, the other still grasping onto her music.

"Look, like it or not – we all know what happened between the two of you before UA. I know Shinso shouldn't have said anything… but…" she sighed deeply, "Bakugo was *really* upset afterwards – like, *really* – he cried."

Midoriya blinked at her in disbelief, "He *cried?"*

She nodded, raising her eyebrows and pursing her lips, "Something about you calling him a villain, I can't remember."

"Don't you dare insult my friend! He's spent his whole life being called a villain – whilst you were called a hero! Well, you know what?! THEY GOT IT THE WRONG WAY AROUND!"

Midoriya gulped, "Ah."

"Look, you two don't have to be *friends* –" Jiro started.

"We are!"

Jiro glared at him, "You're *not.* But I think a *conversation* is *long* overdue."

Midoriya turned his head and gazed back over to Kacchan, who was wandering off into the distance of the final Culture Festival preparations. It was only a few minutes until it opened.

“At least have a go,” Jiro suggested, grabbing Siren in her fist as the bird let out a squeak like a rubber toy. “Come on Siren – I have a feeling you’d only make things worse.” She plopped her on her head and started to walk away, “Good luck!” she called back without turning around.

Siren just tweeted, watching Midoriya as Jiro left him alone.

Midoriya just stood there for a moment.

Eventually, he mustered up the courage, balled his hands into fists, and *marched* after his… old friend.

“Kacchan!” he called out, now running to catch up with him, “Kacchan – wait!”

Kacchan did a double take when he realised who was calling out to him. He had been listening to music or something – earplugs in. He ripped them from his ears and stopped.

Midoriya hadn’t *actually expected him to stop*.

“What do you want?” he snarled harshly. The bearing of his teeth almost made Midoriya flinch.

Midoriya came to a stop in front of him, “I-I… I just think we… need to talk…”

He frowned, “Why the hell –”

“Because it’s long overdue!” he interrupted, clenching his eyes shut and bowing his head as he said so.

Silence fell between the two for a moment.

Midoriya opened an eye slowly. He met the red of Kacchan’s, who tilted his head oddly, and turned away.

Midoriya just watched him leave for a moment. Before hurrying to catch up and walk beside him.

They didn't talk for a moment, just walking side by side as the Culture Festival finally opened its doors to the guests who had clearance to enter the school. Students hurried to their places, whilst others walked around in their friendship groups to eagerly enjoy the festivities whilst they weren't so busy.

Midoriya sighed as he teared his gaze away from them, "I-I…" the words failed him.

What… *did* he want to say? What *could* he say?

He thought back to how he'd resolved his issues with All Might.

"I'm not here to say sorry," Midoriya told him, a strange confidence washing over him.

That made Kacchan look at him strangely.

"For… calling you a villain back at the Sports Festival," Midoriya added, just to make sure they were both thinking of the same thing.

Kacchan looked back to the path ahead of him, not saying a word.

"I'm not apologising because you *deserved it,"* Midoriya snapped. His heart skipped a beat after he said that, '*oh my God, I can't believe I just said that –'* but he was too far ahead to stop now. "You were always so horrible to me… and I never did *anything* to you. Y-You were a real b-bully back then."

"…I know."

Midoriya really did flinch that time, "Y-You know…?" he repeated. He hadn't expected him to say that. Midoriya cleared his throat, "Well, g-good, I –"

"Shinso made that *very clear,"* Kacchan hissed.

Ah – yes, that made more sense. Midoriya just nodded, catching an instinctive apology on his tongue and refusing to let it out.

"Is that the first thing you ever spoke about, huh?" Kacchan continued, shoving his hands in his pockets, "Spilling all that rubbish about me?"

"The first thing I ever said to him was *thank you,"* Midoriya spit at

him. “It’s thanks to *him* that I’m where I want to be now – and he barely knew me back then. He didn’t *have* to… but he did – and that’s how everything changed. It had nothing to do with you.”

“…I’m sorry.”

Midoriya stopped.

Kacchan walked a little further ahead before he stopped too. The noise of the festival was drowned out by Midoriya’s shock, and he just stood there and stared as Kacchan continued.

“I keep… thinking about what happened back in Kamino – when that hand bastard… disintegrated *half your freaking face,”* Kacchan said. He wasn’t facing him, but Midoriya saw him raise a hand and drag it along the side of his own jaw. “I know it’s been so long now… over a month since you got back – but it made me feel so… *useless.”*

Midoriya took a breath and said, “So, now you know how it feels.”

He turned his head slightly, glancing at Midoriya over his shoulder, “You’ve changed.”

Midoriya cocked his head to one side, “I guess… you have too.”

He turned around properly. “You didn’t say that last time we spoke.”

“…No,” Midoriya nodded, stepping a little closer to Kacchan as people started to weave between them both. “Because you’re still… the same but different.”

“…That makes no freaking sense.”

“Yes, it does!”

“Well, you’re the same but different too and it’s driving me up the wall, bastard!” he shouted, it drew a few glances in their direction. “Exactly the same, annoying little nerd you’ve always been – just *louder.”*

Midoriya crossed his arms in irritation, tapping his foot, “And you’re the same… b-brash – aggressive – *egotistical* person you’ve been since we were kids! Just… well, I hope you can see that now.”

Kacchan's lip twitched into a snarl. He rolled his eyes, staring at the sky for a second, before he… smiled, "Bastard – I can't wait until I can finally go against you in hero training."

Midoriya didn't flinch, raising his head in a slight defiance, "Still reckon you'll be Japan's top hero despite everything that's happened?"

He narrowed his eyes, smile fading, "…You think *you* could beat me?"

Midoriya hesitated – he didn't know the answer to that.

Kacchan laughed, "Yeah, that's what I thought." He turned and started to walk away.

"Hey!" Midoriya exclaimed, marching after him, "I'm not saying *I* will – but there are plenty of others. And the hero rankings don't matter anyways!"

"Of course, *you* would say that!"

"And of *course*, you would argue about it! Why can we *never* have normal conversations?!"

"Because you never freaking talk!"

"And *whose fault is that?!"*

"Don't lump that on me *again!"*

"Well, it's true!"

People were giving them both a rather wide berth as they walked back to Heights Alliance, arguing with no remorse.

"*Next* Sports Festival – people will be *properly* celebrating my victory rather than your stupid silver!" Kacchan barked as he opened the doors.

Midoriya marched in behind him, "And who says I'm going to get silver?"

Everyone stopped and stared at him.

Shinso let out a long whistle.

Kacchan just grinned, “I freaking hate you.”

Midoriya sighed. He was never going to be friends with everyone, was he, “Feeling’s mutual.”

And with that, Kacchan left for the stairs.

As soon as he was gone, Jiro bounced in front of him, grabbed onto his shoulders, and said, “*Yes.*”

“W-What?!” Midoriya stammered in reply.

“That was brilliant,” Shinso laughed nervously, accepting a handful of cash from Iida.

Midoriya blinked at him, staring at what he was wearing.

Shinso stopped and sighed deeply, “it’s not as bad as I thought it would be,” he shrugged.

Nearly everyone was dressed up for their performance now – mostly reds, golds and silvers, but Shinso had somehow gotten away with just something black and silver.

“I need to get some more rope for Aoyama,” he explained as he pulled on his shoes, “You coming?”

“NO!” Jiro yelled, tugging on his arm, “Todoroki – have you got his outfit?”

Todoroki just held up a bag.

“GET CHANGED – GET CHANGED – GET CHANGED!” Jiro ordered, pushing Midoriya towards the bathrooms and Siren did loops around her head, making everyone who watched dizzy, “SHINSO – GO – GO!”

“I’M GOING, WOMAN! Stop stressing out!” he laughed, tossing the doors open. “See you in an hour!”

“DON’T YOU DARE TAKE THAT LONG!”

“…Is the performance really in an hour?” Midoriya interjected nervously.

“YES, SO WHAT ARE YOU STANDING AROUND HERE FOR?!”

He snatched the bag out of Todoroki’s hands and ran off up the stairs to his room, rather than the bathrooms, whilst Mina gave Bakugo’s clothing to Kirishima so he could convince him to change too.

Midoriya hesitated at the stairs, “Um, Owl?”

“YES – w-what?” she replied.

“Um – no need to be so nervous,” he smiled, “You’ll be fine!”

She sighed, “I-I’m not nervous…”

He grinned even wider, “Right – you’re excited!”

“WHERE IS SHINSO?!” Jiro cried as she paced around backstage, pulling nervously at her outfit. She was wearing a suit – black with purple and gold accents. Yaoyorozu had done well to match the theme of the song but made her stand out amongst the rest. Jiro was quite keen on keeping it after it was all over – after all, they’d all helped her buy the material and stuff for it – most of it was just clothes she’d bought or been donated, and then altered – a friend had helped her a lot, apparently.

“D-Do you think he’s ok?” stammered Canary unsurely. Shinso hadn’t been kidding, seemingly, when he said he’d be back in an hour. Something *had* to have held him up.

Mina quickly ambushed Canary as he came into view, pulling at his outfit to make sure he’d done it all up right – he’d never been very good at that with his school uniform, so who was to say he’d succeed here? His suit which pretty much the same as Jiro’s – but green instead of purple. It looked weirdly like his hero outfit, which was probably the point.

“I am here!” yelled a voice as they clambered onto the stage – Shinso.

“WHAT HAPPENED?!” yelled Jiro as she caught sight of him. He looked *weirdly* battered – there was even a tear in his top how the *hell*

–

“Nothing,” he said quickly, “It’s fine – Hound Dog and Ectoplasm have it covered now,” he sighed, handing Aoyama over the length of rope that *really* shouldn’t have been too hard to get. They just didn’t want to have to ask Yaoyorozu to make even *more* stuff!

“What do you *mean?”* Jiro demanded.

“It doesn’t matter!” Shinso exclaimed, reaching for his guitar. “I’m fine – it’s all fine! Come on – if we leave this too late, we’ll miss class 1-B’s play.”

“STAGE PEOPLE!” Mina exclaimed, clapping her hands, “Positions for the lights! Remember to leave them in the right places so you can join in on the dancing bit later!”

“A-Are you really ok?” Canary questioned worriedly, hurrying over to him.

“I’m fine!” Shinso insisted. He looked a *mess* – but when did Shinso ever *not?*

“Your radio friend is in the crowd – she says everything’s set up and ready,” that was Iida, who tapped Jiro on the shoulder to get her attention as he told her so. He must have been talking about Aozora.

Jiro’s heart was beating at a hundred miles per hour. But then she caught a glimpse of Canary as he was ushered off into the background. He gave her a thumbs up.

You’re not scared, you’re excited – you’re not scared, you’re excited…

Jiro repeated over and over to herself under her breath. She grabbed the microphone that had been lying on the side and waiting for her –

And as the lights dimmed and audience hushed, she took a deep, shaky breath as everyone hurried to take their positions, and she too, crept out onto the stage.

In absolute darkness, the song began.

"*WOAH –*"

Jiro's class, distributed around the stage and the landings, raised to her left and right, started to sing and stamp their feet. She couldn't imagine *any* of them being as frightened as she was.

"*WOAH –*"

She started to hear the little record player by Yaoyorozu's feet making the sounds that they couldn't replicate themselves on the keyboards – or Kaminari's stupid keytar.

"*WOAH –*"

Jiro's fingers drummed quietly on the side of her microphone, her whole body tense and shaking as the whole stage seemed to tremble beneath the rhythmic stomps of her friends' feet and the claps of their hands – the flash of the lights bordering the stage, so it only lit up the feet of their coordinated dance.

"*WOAH –*"

Bakugo started on the drums. Jiro let herself smile a little, at the thought of Canary's *face* when he first saw him play. He had been… *so amazed* – when he saw the first run through. Jiro let her smile grow wider, trying to think of that, and only that, as her part drew closer and closer.

"*WOAH –*"

She let herself get lost in the music – that's what Canary did, right? Focused on that and only that… He wasn't doing it to entertain others though, *he* was singing because *that* was how he could save others. That was how he could make a difference.

"*WOAH –*"

What was Jiro doing, by putting this together? She glanced out across the crowd. It was dark; she couldn't see much, and they *definitely* couldn't see her properly. But Jiro spied the blinking light of the camera that must have been beside Aozora – manned by her or not, Jiro wasn't entirely sure.

"*WOAH –"*

Who else was there? Her friends outside of class A… her teachers – the *rest of UA* – a few outsiders perhaps, maybe even Eri –

– Eri.

She had been so excited for this!

"*WOAH –"*

Jiro took another breath, letting herself calm – slowing the panicked beat of her heart as she bowed her head in the starting pose, waiting for the spotlight to be aimed on her.

She wasn't just doing this for Canary –

– It was for Eri… and herself.

"*WOAH!"*

And there was the light.

"*Ladies and gents, this is the moment you've waited for."*

It turned off for a moment – and she changed position – her eyes still not meeting that of the crowd.

"*Been searching in the dark –"* she caught the slightest glimpse of the audience.

That was a lot of people…

"*And buried in your bones –"*

– she had her eyes closed in that line. But… she could do this – she could do this! Music… it drove her forwards; the beat the scaffolding for every action. In the rhythm, she was safe.

"*And all that was real, is left behind…"*

She raised her head to the crowd, taking in the view as she walked forwards with the beat of the music, the spotlight following her. That was what it was going to be like in the future, right – *people* watching her every movement. That was the downside of being a hero. All eyes were on her.

"*Don't care what comes after –"*

She still couldn't believe how relaxed Canary seemed during the Sports Festival – that shy, mute boy who took the world by storm – and she was lucky enough to be part of it.

"*Just surrender 'cause you feel the feeling taking over!"*

The spotlight grew from her, illuminating the stage behind her just enough so the audience could see what was going on in the background, and Jiro – well, felt the music run through her veins, and just for a moment, she knew what it was like to be Canary.

"*– and you'll find devotion!"*

She paid little attention to the stares – to the dancers – to *anything* but the music. And only now, did she realise how Canary did it…

He wasn't nervous at all – *he was excited.*

She stomped her foot, "*So tell me do you wanna go?!"*

Suddenly, Mina was beside her. The two followed the routine they'd practised mercilessly again, and again – a pattern Jiro could lose herself in.

"*Where the runaways, are running the night!"*

She knew she was grinning stupidly – and it was all on camera – but she just couldn't *help* it.

"*Oh, this is the greatest show!"*

Everyone joined in on that part – until she was back to singing alone again, but she didn't care. It wasn't like she had a Quirk which could give a wonderful power to the music, like Canary's could – but there was something in it anyway, that, she was sure of.

Her eyes caught that of Eri's, and saw the smile forming on her face –

Now, *that* – was the only power she needed. The power, to make

someone smile.

"*Oh, this is the greatest show!"*

As the lights covered the entire stage, Jiro hurried up to the right side of the raised platform, singing all the while, *"– colossal we come these renegades in the ring."*

She was beside Iida and Uraraka now, following their movements, no matter how rigid Iida's insisted on being, as the camera followed her.

"– where the lost get found in the crown of the circus king!"

Now it was Uraraka's turn, she leapt off the side of the platform, making herself float as she dived over the heads of the crowd.

"*It's only this moment, don't care what comes after!"*

People were cheering and floating around, using Sero's tape that was handed out as a safety measure, and Uraraka was rescued on the other side, landing confidently on the left platform to continue her dance.

Jiro, meanwhile, had ran back down to the stage, and skidded right into the middle and –

"*– and you wanna go!"*

There was a great cheer as the next part of their ridiculous plan came into action – and Aoyama was suddenly the *disco ball* spinning from the ceiling, Todoroki's ice raining as snowflakes around them. Jiro had her free arm, the one not clutching her microphone, spread out wide as it spiralled down around her.

The others sang, "*Impossible comes true –"*

"– Intoxicating you –" she added, with a knowing grin as she thought back to Stain.

"*This is the greatest show!"*

She span and took in the beaming faces of her musicians – even Shinso was enjoying himself.

"*– we won't come down!"*

She took the microphone away from her face for a moment as she joined in on Mina's dance moves, their arms moving about with great

fluidity and synchronisation.

"*Watching it come true –*

"– it's taking over you!"

Was Shinso singing along? Heck yeah – he was *so* singing along. Jiro grinned even wider.

As the next verse began, Jiro skipped over to the left side of the raised platforms, wandering casually up the stairs.

"*It's everything you ever want…"*

She weaved in and out of their wonderful dancers, themselves, grinning stupidly whilst they knew the camera was on them.

"*And it's here, right in front of you…"*

She leant over the barricade reaching out to the camera, which Eri was beside, as she sang –

"*– this is where you wanna be…"*

Aozora, ever the onion, was *definitely* crying. Jiro could hear her words already, "*MY LITTLE FLEDGLING ALL GROWN UP –"*

"*– it's everything you ever need…"*

She started to hurry right to the very end of the platform, noticing things that the rest of the audience didn't as dancers moved around on the stage and the platforms – as Todoroki and Kirishima pulled Aoyama back to hurry down to their positions, as they geared up for Jiro's favourite part –

– the final chorus.

"*THIS IS WHERE YOU WANNA BE!"*

Jiro's eyes clenched shut, she sang her greatest note – insecurities drowned away by the force of her song and the silent encouragement of the others, the music preparing itself for its grand finale.

"*– where the runaways are running the night –"*

Most of the girls were at the front of the stage now, Mina at the helm, clapping and stomping their feet as Jiro weaved her way, slowly but

surely, down towards them.

"*This is the greatest show!"*

Jiro was so glad Canary had uncovered what they were doing before today. It wouldn't have been the same if they hadn't added in this one, final bit –

– for a guy with such a musical life, this was the best possibly way they could have done it.

"*We light it up, we won't come down –"*

Jiro wasn't singing into her microphone as she hurried down the stairs, careful that the clanging of the metal against her shoes wouldn't be picked up. Did anyone else notice how they'd left a gap to the right, near the stairs?

Because the light focused in and –

"*THIS IS THE GREATEST SHOW!"* Canary skidded into view.

The audience cheered louder than they ever had before – Jiro caught the *beaming* smile upon Eri's face, and she was pretty sure Present Mic was hugging Aozora and crying.

"*We're the runaways –"*

Jiro and Canary met in the centre of the stage, swapping places from left to right –

"*Impossible comes true, it's taking over you!"* they sang together, beaming at each other from ear to ear.

"*This is the greatest show!"*

With the lights fixed in place, everyone was making their way down to the front of the stage.

"*AND THE WALLS CAN'T STOP US NOW!"*

Jiro wasn't sure if she'd ever seen Canary smile so wide and truly, it made her smile brighter too. She saw him glance at Shinso as he sang along – his smile really *was* infectious – that was the smile of a real hero.

Now at the front of the class, Jiro and Midoriya hurried to the edge of

the stage.

"'Cause everything you want is right in front of you –"

They turned to each other, *"And you see the impossible is coming true –"*

Yeah, this was Jiro's favourite part, for sure.

"*And the walls can't stop us –"*

"– now!"

"Now – Yeah!"

They ran back to the others – all in a line between the musicians, spread out across the stage. With Jiro and Canary in the middle – Shinso beside him and Todoroki just a little further. Jiro had Uraraka and Iida on the other side. It was an arrangement she'd made sure of during the planning of it all – no one had questioned it – but there they were, all six of them. They'd all met in strange ways and faced an even stranger future together. Even *tomorrow* was unsure, and Jiro wouldn't have it any other way. She was pretty sure she wasn't alone in that thought. It didn't matter about their weird faults and insecurities – and Canary had always had more than enough to share around… They were together right now – all of them, and the rest of class A too – whatever villains, trials and tribulations they would one day face, Jiro knew, in that moment, that everything would be ok.

The was the power that music brought.

That was the power, of Canary.

"*THIS IS THE GREATEST SHOW!"*

LISTENER {JIRO}: So, let me get this straight. You chose the name *Canary* because of some weird as hell *idiom?!*

CANARY: It's not just an *idiom* – canaries in a coal mine! Weren't you listening to anything I said? *I* thought it was cool – they were like… the heroes of the miners! And that's why, of all birds – I went with canaries.

PRESENT MIC: If he didn't choose canaries – he might have never gotten Siren as a *definitely not pet!*

CANARY: Attack bird.

LISTENER {JIRO}: Obviously.

CANARY: Obviously!

PRESENT MIC: OK – well then, *Jiro* – you've asked your question –

LISTENER {JIRO}: Seriously though, the English homework –

Canary sighs deeply

CANARY: Just… go up to my room – I make a note of my homework on the planner on my desk –

A scraping of chairs can be heard from the listener's end

CANARY: Siren's busy making a nest don't you dare mess it up!

LISTENER {JIRO}: Yeah, yeah – Raven's gonna go get it – thank youuuuu –

CANARY: I am way too easily manipulated.

PRESENT MIC: How do you think you ended up on this radio show?

CANARY: … I mean –

PRESENT MIC: ANYWAY – JIRO – OWL – SONG!

LISTENER {JIRO}: Oh, right – yeah – song. Canary! Sing something!

CANARY: Why do I *always* have to sing something?

LISTENER {JIRO}: Because it shuts you up – now get your butt of that chair and –

CANARY: I know, I *know* – I guess I'm singing something – *again.*

PRESENT MIC: *YYYEEEAAAHHH* –

Siren joins in

CANARY: I'm going to the soundproof room to escape from THIS MADNESS!

PRESENT MIC: Siren, you and I make a brilliant team – *aaannnddd* he's gone! Canary's left the room – and in this small moment of limbo, I *urge* you *all* to send him your best wishes for the UA Sports Festival! It's just around the corner and who *knows* what's gonna happen *this* year?!

CANARY: I'm back.

PRESENT MIC: THAT WAS QUICK!

CANARY: I'm getting efficient at this.

PRESENT MIC: EVIDENTLY! *But* – before we do that, let me say GOODBYE, LITTLE LISTENERS! This'll be the last song of the evening, so, we'll see you *next Tuesday* for our final radio show before Canary's second year UA Sports Festival! Good luck to *all* UA students! *But especially Canary.*

CANARY: And there's yet another reason why you are an extremely biased announcer –

PRESENT MIC: DO YOUR SINGING THING!

Canary laughs

CANARY: Ok, ok –

Brave – Sara Bareilles

Jiro stood up from her seat and smiled.

"*You can be amazing – you can turn a phrase into a weapon or a drug –"*

"You got that planner, Raven?!" she called out as Shinso hurried down the stairs and back into view.

"Yep," he sighed, waving it at them.

"*– or be the backlash of somebody's lack of love."*

"Let me just find the right page…" he explained, flipping through it as he approached the group.

And he stopped and stared.

"*Or you can start speaking up."*

Shinso sighed deeply, "He knew we'd do this."

"*What?!"* Uraraka exclaimed, snatching the planner off of him. "HOW COULD HE?! That's so *mean!"* she pretended to sob.

"*Kept on the inside and no sunlight – sometimes a shadow wins."*

She handed the planner over to Jiro, who grinned and shook her head at the words.

Maybe next time, do you homework on time.

"*– say! What you wanna say!"*

Jiro turned to the radio sitting on the table in the common room, shaking her head, *oh, Canary…*

"*Honestly, I wanna see you be brave!"*

"Now what do we do?" groaned Uraraka.

"Present Mic won't care," shrugged Shinso. "Let's just waste the lesson

by accusing him of being a biased presenter – it works literally every time."

"This is true," she nodded.

"*Or…"* Shinso frowned, "I bet Crane will know what the homework was…"

"*Honestly –"*

And they all took off up the stairs to find Iida –

"*– I wanna see you be brave!"*

– except Jiro, who lagged behind, and gazed over at Yaoyorozu, who just sipped her tea absentmindedly.

"You *so* know what the homework was, don't you?" she grinned.

Yaoyorozu put her cup down on her saucer and smiled, "There wasn't any homework."

"*I wanna see you be brave!"*

"*Everybody's been there, everybody's been stared down by the enemy…"*

Eri sat on her bed, swinging her legs back and forth as she gazed at the phone which played the radio out loud.

"*– bow down to the mighty."*

She hugged her cuddly toy bear close to her chest and smiled.

"*– stop holding your tongue!"*

Eri slipped off and landed on the floor, holding onto the hand of her bear as she wandered across the room.

"*– out of the cage where you live…"*

She grabbed her pen and paper, hauled herself up onto a chair, and grinned. Staring at the currently blank page and listening to the music, whilst Lemillion patted a sleeping Suneater on the head, she

started to draw her favourite hero.

"*– how big your brave is!"*

Aozora pranced around the radio waiting room, watching Canary struggling to laugh at her *very* poor dance moves as he sang the chorus of the sweet song.

"*– let the words fall out!"*

She joined in, using her *terrible* singing voice that she knew Canary couldn't hear, but could *imagine*, nonetheless.

"*I WANNA SEE YOU BE BRAVE!"*

Nakano looked like he was about ready to wallop her around the head with something large, heavy and metal. Probably a chair –

He couldn't get around to it because, still in his wheelie chair, Aozora grabbed onto his arms and started dancing with him across the room, despite the wire of his headphones tugging them off his head, *and* his consistent protesting.

"*I wanna see you be brave!"*

"*Innocence, your history of silence –"* Midoriya sang, holding onto his headphones as he swayed back and forth losing himself in the fitting meaning of his words, "*– did you think it would?"*

It had been over a year since he started at the radio show now. So many things had happened, and so many more were bound to come…

But with a grin – he saw Siren perched outside the soundproof window, obscuring the sight of Nakano hitting Aozora with a pillow mercilessly.

"*Say, what you wanna say – and let the words fall out! Honestly, I wanna*

see you be brave!"

Now in the know of Midoriya's petty prank, Shinso sunk into an armchair in the common room, smiling and shaking his head at the sound of his friend's wonderful singing voice, fingers running over his feather necklace fondly.

Too quiet for anyone else to hear, he let himself sing softly along, "*Honestly, I wanna see you be brave…"*

Jiro grinned at him, and pulled him to his feet, "No, no, no –" he said as she started to sing and spin him around in circles.

"*I just wanna see you –"*

"*I wanna see you be brave!"* Midoriya sang *spectacularly* over the radio.

Jiro tossed Shinso into the sofa, where he lay, and considered whether he wanted to go through the pain of pretending to be dead again, because that *never* seemed to end well for him.

"*I, just wanna see you!"* Jiro laughed.

Instead, he just watched as a good majority of the rest of class A started to laugh and dance around the common room area to the end of the song.

"*– See you be brave!"*

Shinso decided he quite liked it – the song – well, the meaning, definitely.

He smiled – sitting up.

Who could have known Midoriya could go so far? Do so much?

Shinso tried not to think about all the things that could have gone wrong – all the things that could *still* go wrong, and instead focused on the now.

Now, there was no danger in the coal mines.

Right now, Canary was still singing.

And it would take a hell of a lot, to get him to ever stop.

Chapter End Notes

> Yes, Shinso was the one who took down Gentle and La Brava – he got Gentle first with his brainwashing but had a bit of a struggle whilst the two kept getting each other out of his Quirk, having seen it in action during the Sports Festival. He won in the end though, and ordered them to hand themselves in, removing his Quirk as they did so…

Songs used in this chapter:

The Greatest Show – The Greatest Showman Cast

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyVYXRD1Ans

Brave – Sara Barellies

Original: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QUQsqBqxoR4

Male edit (by ForTheTenors): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms-ji75KL-o

Male cover (by Derek Govin & Jeff Hendrick): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BfRVEYWvNg

FINAL ART SECTION (which I edit to add more art)

Here's **Thelovypop17**'s final edition! A Canary with his wings!

This is Syra Eerie with Siren in Midoriya's scarf XD

Frost Nova did this adorable drawing of Siren and her collection!

Jaroo0707 has returned with a canary flying free

Pigeonat has done a drawing of the Aria!

smyad drew *me* :D

FiveInBinaryOr101 has a few editions, we have… me flying above the clouds, a wallpaper of April the sheep, if you were there for that story XD – and a few pixel arts! AND the best meme edition yet

DaKuroYanART on Instragram did two amazing doodles! One of

Canary in his hero costume and the other of him in the Sports Festival!

This one's by basically-shakespeare, which is of this chapter and the Greatest Show!

This is psycho_cinno's 'good vibes' drawing of Midoriya and Siren!

Silver Fables did a really cool picture of Canary singing Radioactive!

We have more cosplay! This one's by adri_academia on TickTock!

I ran out of room in these endnotes to put art so revert to chapter 49 for more XD

- and here’s mine (posted on the nightmare that is Tumblr, yesterday evening)

* Waves goodbye from the clouds *

End Notes

This is the YouTube playlist for all songs that Canary sings in this story! They're all really great - either covers or originals, and you should go check them out! :)

Here, is the Spotify version!

Finally, here is the link to the chaos – the Discord!

Thank you so much for sticking out and reading my story!

The real morals of Canary revolved around learning to find your voice and not being scared to use it, but also that qualities often seen to be good above all else, can be bad in the wrong amount. After so much selflessness, you should never be afraid to live *selfishly*, and to do things for *you*. Somethings should *not* be forgiven, and that's not wrong. It *is* selfish. But that word has so many negative connotations that people forget the goodness in it too. Sometimes, learning to not forgive, will help both you and the recipient grow into better people. It's not *forgive and forget*. You don't have to forgive and you most certainly don't have to forget. What is needed, is an apology and an understanding.
But to do any of this, you must learn to be brave. You must learn that being angry is *ok*. Words are powerful things. Yield them with this knowledge, and you will go far in life.
I believe in you.

Bored? So am I! Here's a Spotify playlist with 50 songs I like and randomly listen to thinking, "Hm... Canary would probably sing this at some point in the future." So, you're welcome to listen and try and think up what scenario I'd imagined each song with XD

Works inspired by this one

Show Yourself Canary by SkylerSkyhigh, When Midoriya Played God With Song [On Indefinite Hiatus] by orphan_account, Songbird by lilnome, The Wrong Song by Doctor_Depression, Another Face in the Crowd by fruitanalogies, Reacting to Canary by WildflowerDar, Isekai - New Reality by DressedToStress, [Podfic]

Canary by cloud_nine_and_three_quarters by Soyvolon, Canary's In The Wrong Tree by orphan_account, Silence in the Coal Mine by Jaroo0707, Canary's Arsenal by Shiny9Tails, Love is Gone by Tequilakeela, The Idol Hero: Songstress by DrgnMstr, A little hurt, a little human. by xyontey, [abandoned] Let Us All Watch Canary by Koyaxe, The Singer Hero: Canary by SatWit, Orpheus by Rye (AdoxographicGrim), My Singer Academia by StrawBerry_Ryan, A Rising Symphony, A Hopeful Song by Ladybird_with_a_pen, As the Canary Stops Singing by Jaroo0707

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!